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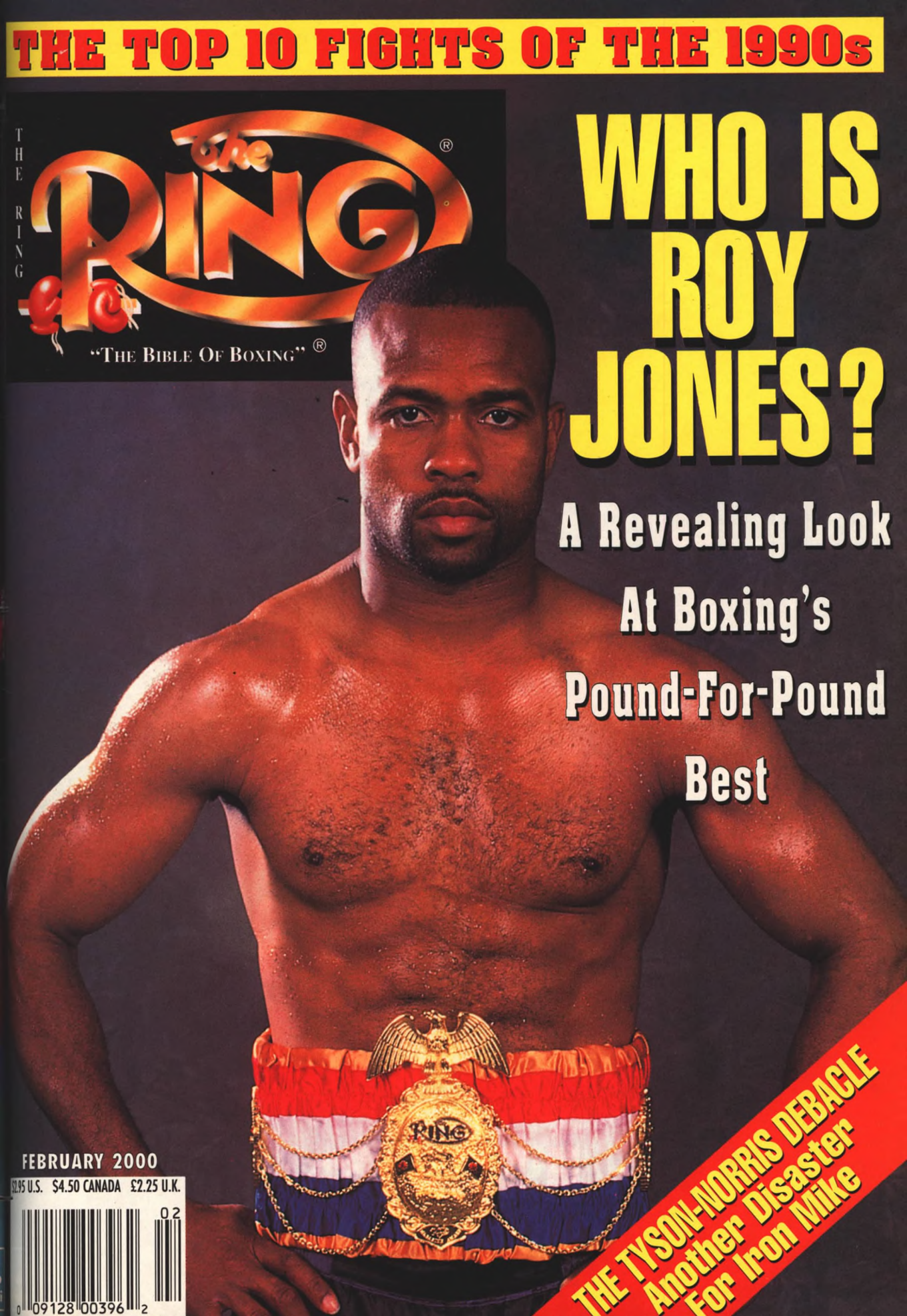

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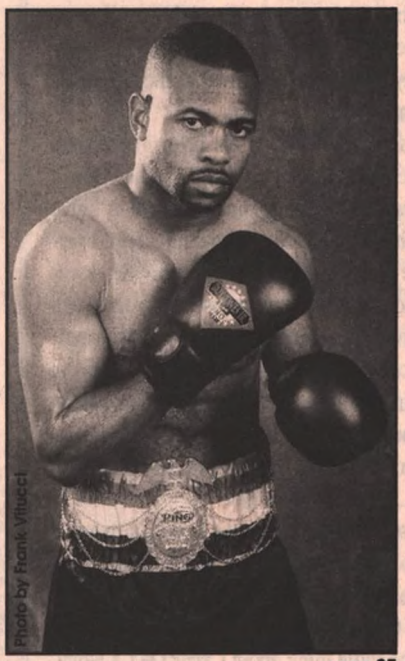
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Joe Kalman

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RINGSIDE

The recent death of Bill Douglas of colon cancer at age 59 brought back an avalanche of memories. To the majority of today's fans, he was best known as the father of former heavyweight champion Buster Douglas. But to me, he'll always be Bill "Dynamite" Douglas, the vicious-punching middleweight who invaded my hometown of Philadelphia in the early-1970s and quickly won the hearts of the city's hard-to-please fans with his uncompromising fighting style.

In his first Philly appearance, Douglas shocked the crowd by knocking out local prospect Billy Lloyd. Promoter J Russell Peltz knew a good thing when he saw it, and brought Douglas back the next month against fringe contender Carlos Marks, whom he stopped in the 10th round of a savage, see-saw punchout.

Those were the days when promoters depended on filling seats in order to make money. Forget TV. The *Friday Night Fights* were history by the time Douglas began to make a name for himself, and cable networks like ESPN and USA didn't even exist. But by employing the kind of long-range planning that is rarely, if ever, used by promoters today, Peltz developed Douglas into the perfect rival to pit against hometown hero Bennie Briscoe. He brought Douglas back three more times before finally matching him with "Baaaaad Bennie" in June '73. And by the time the two sluggers climbed into the ring at the Spectrum, Douglas had tallied five straight wins in the City of Brotherly Love, and 9,122 paying customers were on hand to see if Briscoe could stop his rampage.

As it turned out, Briscoe's battering ram of a left jab eventually proved too much for Douglas, whose face was blood-smeared and disfigured by the time the referee rescued him in the eighth round. Douglas was never quite the same after that, but there was still plenty of fight left in him, as future light heavyweight champion and eventual Hall of Famer Matthew Saad Muhammad discovered in September '77.

Defense was never a consideration as the pair took turns slamming each other with brutal powershots, and there were several occasions when Muhammad was perilously close to being stopped. But as was his habit throughout his remarkable career, Saad refused to capitulate, desperately swinging away with his own haymakers as the crowd at the Spectrum stood on its collective feet and roared encouragement.

Muhammad eventually triumphed when the brawl was halted in his favor in the sixth round, but it was an immensely unpopular stoppage. The Philadelphia fans, who had grown to think of Douglas as one of their own, were incensed that referee Hank Cisco didn't give Douglas the same chance to recoup and rally back that he'd afforded Muhammad on several occasions. Peltz was so enraged, he blasted Cisco publicly, despite the fact that Saad was the house fighter. Douglas stirred that kind of passion because, win or lose, he fought with every ounce of courage and strength he possessed, every time he ducked between the ropes.

After his fighting days were over, Douglas became a trainer and was instrumental in developing the fighter who would become the first man to beat Mike Tyson. Unfortunately, Buster didn't inherit his father's fiery nature and never grew to love the give-and-take of combat the way his old man did. If he had, Buster might still be heavyweight champion today.

Bill Douglas wasn't a great fighter in the strict sense of the term, but he was a damned good one, tough and fierce and the owner of a right hand that was as explosive as his nickname. It's been more than 20 years since I last saw "Dynamite" Douglas fight, but the memories of the thrills he gave me are as vivid as if they were yesterday. Despite their marvelous talents, I doubt I'm going to be able to say the same thing about Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad, and Roy Jones 20 years from now.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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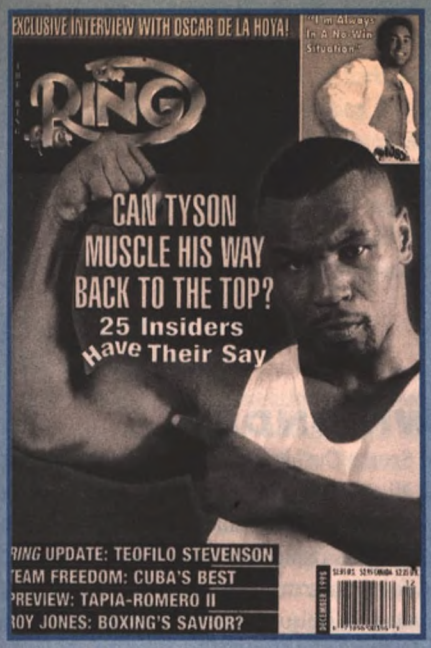

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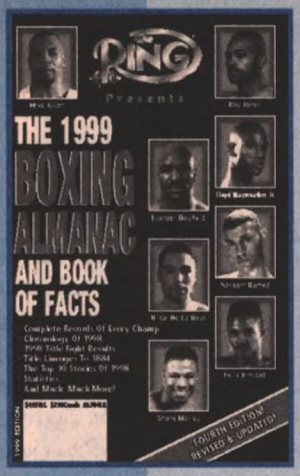

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FEELING ROBBED DOWN UNDER

I read an interesting story called "Emanuel Steward Speaks Out" in the August '99 edition of THE RING, in which Emanuel spoke with Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins relating to the judging of the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield fight. It was deja vu as far as Australian boxing fans are concerned. On a Don King-promoted fight in Las Vegas, our great fighter Jeff Fenech was on the short end of a similar hatchet job. Fenech won clearly and fought a great fight in his first bout against Azumah Nelson, but an unknown Puerto Rican judge voted for Nelson, and the bout finished up in a draw.

Fight fans are angry about these "robberies," and are entitled to ask what's going on here, as Don King smiles shrewdly and talks about rematches.

I just hope the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, when in operation, has the power to appoint an honest group of people with plenty of boxing knowledge to appoint all officials in big title bouts in the United States, taking that job right out of the reach of the alphabet groups and promoters. There are some very capable officials around the world, like our own Billy Males, who should have been given more opportunities to handle big title fights.

IAN DYER
Victoria State, Australia

IKE'S NO TIGER

As a longstanding fight fan, a regular subscriber, and an occasional contributor to THE RING, but most importantly as a Nigerian, I read with much distress the report on Nigerian heavyweight contender Ike Ibeabuchi in your December 1999 issue, "The Most Dangerous Man In Boxing ... In And Out of The Ring."

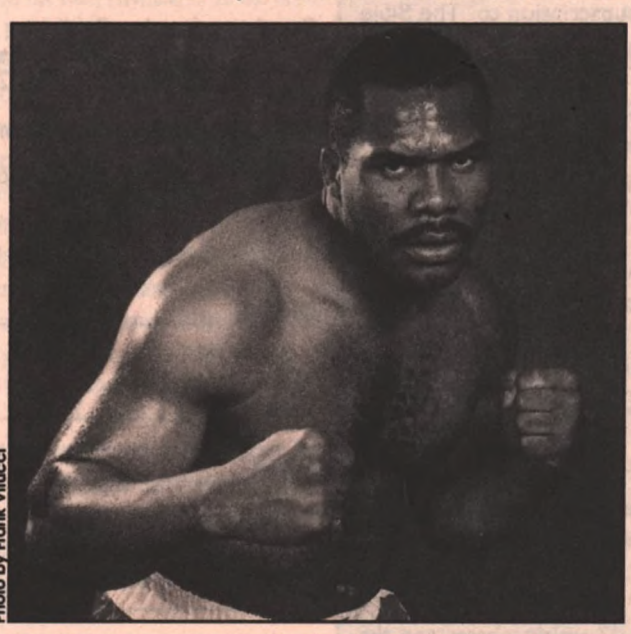


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Troubled heavyweight Ike Ibeabuchi should follow the path of legendary African champion Dick Tiger, says reader Damola Ifaturoti. At the rate Ibeabuchi is going, he may never realize his vast potential.

Indeed, it is a great shame that after establishing a legitimate place for himself as one of the very top young heavyweights currently, Ike seems headed for disaster out of the ring. Both of the other notorious fighters writer Eric Raskin compared Ike with, Sonny Liston and Mike Tyson, were at least able to fulfill a part of their immense potentials by winning world titles before subsequently frittering away their talents. It is now highly unlikely that Ike will ever achieve anything comparable, as a long jail term seems to await him. This will turn out to be a real great shame, as Ibeabuchi seemed poised to perform in the long lost tradition of Nigeria's, and indeed

Africa's, greatest fighter of all-time, Dick Tiger, who interestingly belonged to the same ethnic group as Ike. If by some stroke of luck, providence spares Ike the long incarceration that now seems imminent for him, he should borrow a leaf from Tiger's legendary discipline and humility in all his future dealings. In and out of the ring.

DAMOLA IFATUROTI
Plainsboro, NJ

OSCAR-FELIX REACTION

I know at least in this magazine I don't need to explain what is wrong with boxing in the 1990s. For me, Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad was the last straw. This past summer, I was able to forget the bad taste in my mouth that followed Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield because I had the "Fight Of The Millennium" to look forward to. I even wrote an article for a local newspaper urging mainstream sports fans to come back to boxing for this event. In my opinion, the fight was a total disgrace; neither fighter can be considered to be great, and once again the fans got ripped off. As far as future pay-per-view fights are concerned, all I can say is no more, no more, no more.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

The Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight drew strong reactions from readers, who were not only dissatisfied with the fight, but also with the commentating. According to reader Stephanie Alegria, the HBO team showed a blatant bias toward "The Golden Boy."

I have been a staunch supporter of boxing for 30 years. I remember the golden age of the heavyweights in the 1970s, and the welterweights and middleweights of the 1980s. I have put up with a lot of junk in the '90s, but still remained a fan because, occasionally, there was still a great fight (Tyson-Holyfield I) or exciting fighters such as Arturo Gatti. No more. Boxing turned off mainstream sports fans about 10 years ago, but now they may begin to lose fight fans.

First off, Trinidad showed me nothing in this fight. Through seven rounds, De La Hoya completely shut him down as he stalked Oscar with a confused look on his face. "Tito" won only because Oscar stopped fighting. It was the most hollow victory I have ever seen. Trinidad is not a great Puerto Rican fighter. He could not carry Carlos Ortiz' jockstrap. De La Hoya fought a smart, if dull, tactical fight for seven rounds. Then he just stopped. Can anyone imagine Sugar Ray Robinson, Carmen Basilio, Emile Griffith, Ray Leonard, or any other great welterweight ceasing to fight because they thought they were ahead? A warrior would never go out that way. Yes, it's true Oscar deserved the decision because he won more rounds, but considering his non-performance, I don't care.

TOM PARROTT
Moosup, CT

I am writing to register my disbelief at the result of the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight. This is a grave injustice to a great boxer, and by extension, to boxing itself. De La Hoya gave a masterful performance of boxing, where it is equally important to avoid blows as to deliver them. He made Trinidad look like a plodder who could hardly string two punches together all night. I will no longer pay another cent to pay-per-view when Don King is involved. I urge everyone else to follow suit until we start seeing judging decisions based on reality and professionalism.

ANTHONY STAMBOULIEH
Vernon, British Columbia

In the days since the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight, I've come to the conclusion that one of the worst things about boxing in 1999 is the commentators. Yes, that's right, the crews assigned the bouts. There is a definite bias to the commentating.

For example, the HBO crew of Jim Lampley, Larry Merchant, and George Foreman worked the De La Hoya-Trinidad fight, and it was clear they were in favor of "The Golden Boy." Merchant could not remember Trinidad's name, referring to him as "the other guy." Lampley kept bragging up the combinations Oscar was throwing. At times, he applauded De La Hoya for a fantastic combination, not bothering to notice that Oscar had not landed one punch. Foreman spent most of the 12 rounds marveling at Oscar's beautiful left jab.

By contrast, they rarely gave Trinidad credit for his work. In the later rounds, when he was coming on strong and was connecting with regularity, they blatantly ignored him and talked instead about the training that each fighter had supposedly done for this fight.

I acknowledge that commentators are a helpful part of televised boxing, but I am concerned about the misleading statements they continue to make, the misinformation they tell their viewing audience, and the extreme favoritism they display toward the fighters under contract with their networks. For the casual boxing viewer, this does not help them or boxing.

STEPHANIE ALEGRIA
Reno, NV ■

ROUND ONE

GIRL POWER

She didn't blurt out, "I'm so pretty!" even though she is, or recite a poem about all the nasty things she was going to do to April Fowler, even though she has no objections to rhymin' about her timing. The youngest daughter of Muhammad Ali even suggests that, before too long, she could be "The Greatest" on the female side of her daddy's former profession. Just don't try to slap a nickname on her, as a Syracuse sportswriter attempted to do by dubbing her "Madame Butterfly."

"I *hate* that," Laila Ali said. "I'm not big on nicknames."

Laila Ali, 21 years old and as full of herself as her father was in his preening prime, made her much-anticipated professional debut October 9 at the Turning Stone Casino Resort in Verona, New York. Reporters from as far away as Europe and Asia were on hand to chronicle the event, as much in anticipation of Muhammad Ali's presence at ringside as for Laila's brief demonstration of superiority against a vastly overmatched opponent. What the media caught was a brief glimpse of the three-time former heavyweight champion, now 57 and battling the crippling effects of Parkinson's Syndrome, looking on with pride as the only one of his nine children to take up boxing set a family record for brevity with the 31-second knockout. Fowler, 27, a single mother of two and a waitress from Michigan City, Indiana, never landed a punch, hardly attempted to throw any, and went down from the first power shot Ali threw, an overhand right. Now 0-2 with two first-round knockout losses, she promptly announced her retirement from the ring.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Ali made quick work of the hapless Fowler

Laila Ali's future, it would seem, is much more uncertain. While it would appear she has some skills, possibly passed on through good genetics, the 5'10", 166-pounder could have a difficult time lining up legitimate opponents in a weight class where the talent pool is so shallow as to be almost non-existent.

Promoter Mike Acri, who apologized for Fowler's ineptness, said he would search high and low for women who might provide Ali with some semblance of competition. Any ladies who look and fight like Joe Frazier presumably would be welcomed. Not that Ali, who apparently sees boxing as a springboard to endorsements and movie offers, believes anyone can be located who can endure against her.

"She couldn't take my power," said Ali, who stood over Fowler much as her father had against Sonny Liston in their controversial May 25, 1965, rematch in Lewiston, Maine. "None of them are going to be able to take my power. They're all going to get knocked out." To which Johnny McClain, the cruiserweight who serves as Laila's boyfriend, sparring partner, and co-trainer, replied, Bundini Brown-style: "She's fast, she's pretty, she's young, she's sweet, and she can't possibly be beat."

—Bernard Fernandez

Cuello celebrates title win with countryman Monzon

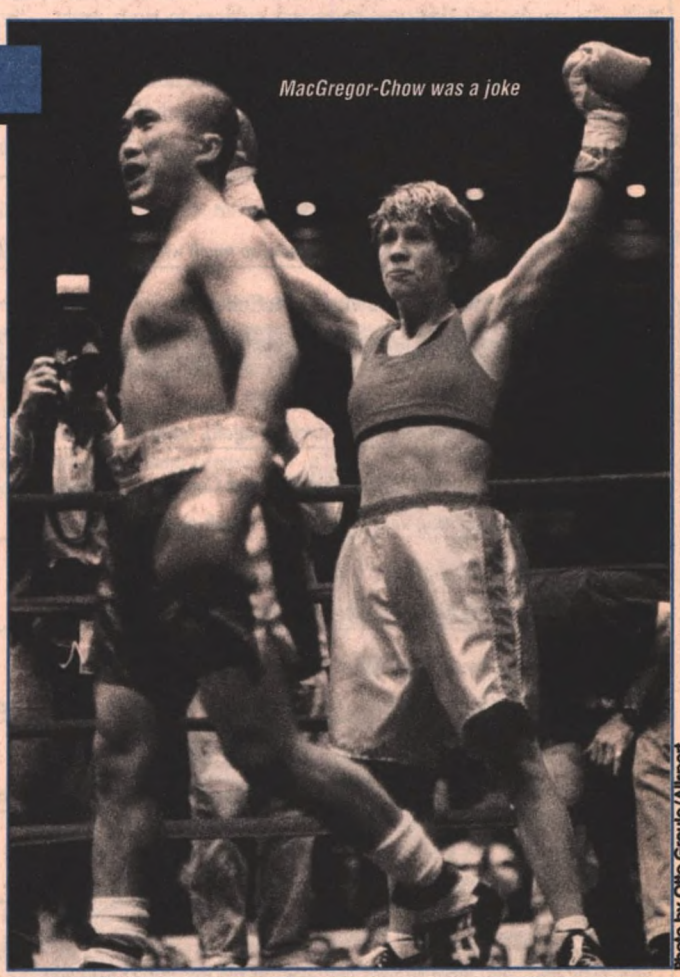
MIGUEL ANGEL CUELLO, 1946-1999

Former WBC light heavyweight champion Miguel Angel Cuello, 53, died of a heart attack on September 14, in Elortondo, Argentina, while training his eldest son Mariano.

The hard-hitting Cuello, who turned pro in 1973 after representing Argentina at the '72 Munich Olympics, was a stablemate of then-middleweight champion Carlos Monzon, and like his fellow countryman, fought many of his important bouts in Europe. Cuello won the vacant 175-pound title with a ninth-round knockout of American Jesse Burnett on May 21, 1977, in Monte Carlo. He was dethroned in his first defense when Mate Parlov stopped him in the ninth round on January 7, 1978, in Milan, Italy.

Discouraged that he could not obtain a rematch with Parlov, Cuello, 21-1 (19), quit the ring shortly after losing the title. Recently, Cuello wanted to return to the ring to challenge current Argentine heavyweight champion Fabio Moli, but was talked out of it by trainer Jose Batista.

BATTLE OF THE SEXES



MacGregor-Chow was a joke

Photo by Otto Greule/Allsport

Although it garnered far more attention than most world title fights, predictably, boxing's first sanctioned bout between a man and a woman turned out to be a farce. The problem wasn't so much the mixed-gender nature of the fight, but rather the Butterbean-esque matchmaking that practically guaranteed victory for Margaret MacGregor, the 36-year-old landscaper who won a four-round decision over sometimes jockey Loi Chow before a sellout crowd of 2,768 at Mercer Arena in Seattle, Washington.

Although listed as 5'2", Chow barely came up to the 5'5" MacGregor's chin, and never landed a significant punch. Despite prefight boasts that he would "get her out of there in a hurry," Chow, 34, had to take medication in order to bring his blood pressure down to a level acceptable to the local boxing commission.

"He looked scared out of his wits," said lightweight Martin O'Malley, who also fought on the card—against a man.

Although the MacGregor-Chow bout was sanctioned by the Washington State Department of Licensing, Greg Sirb, president of the Association of Boxing Commissioners, instructed Fight Fax, boxing's official record-keeper, to consider it an exhibition because the ABC opposes male vs. female bouts. There was also strong reaction from Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

"It's not right, and it will never happen here," said Ratner. "I don't care who it is or what they say, the state of Nevada will not allow something like that to occur."

But allowing Butterbean to continue to beat up hapless no-hopers is okay. Right, Marc?

Sadly, the only two things the MacGregor-Chow fight proved was that a mismatch is a mismatch, regardless of the gender of the competitors—and that sexism and the Sweet Science are still going steady.

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
10-3-99	Syd Vanderpool KO 7 Alfonso Daniels	FOXSN	sm	C+	C	B-
Hard-hitting Vanderpool becoming a factor in wide-open super middle picture						
10-3-99	Manuel Garnica W 10 Gabe Ruelas	FOXSN	jw	C	B-	C+
Further proof that neither of the Ruelas brothers is world class any longer						
10-8-99	Edwin Santana D 10 Francisco Cruz	ESPN2	l	C	B	C-
Cruz fades after fast start, allows Santana to salvage draw						
10-8-99	James Toney W 10 Ramon Garbey	ESPN2	c	B+	B+	C
Toney may not be exciting, but watch closely and you'll see things no one else can do						
10-15-99	Derrick Gainer KO 5 Sergio Reyes	ESPN2	l	B	C-	C
Gainer keeps busy waiting for long overdue title shot						
10-15-99	Arthur Williams W 10 Daren Zenner	ESPN2	c	C+	C-	D
Think maybe Zenner should have tried a bodypunch or two? Or any punch, for that matter?						
10-22-99	James Crayton W 10 Pedro Saiz	ESPN2	jw	C+	B+	C+
Veteran Crayton rises from first-round knockdown to take close nod						
10-22-99	Mahan Washington W 6 Cihat Salman	ESPN2	w	D+	B+	C+
Sharp-shooting Washington dominates to score solid distance win						
10-22-99	David Telesco KO 11 Will Taylor	ESPN2	lh	A-	A-	C+
Why does Telesco waste time moving around so much when he can punch like this?						
10-22-99	**Erik Morales W 12 Wayne McCullough**	**HBO**	**WBC jf**	**A**	**B**	**A**
Morales just keeps getting better; McCullough tough but outclassed						
10-22-99	**Naseem Hamed W 12 Cesar Soto**	**HBO**	**WBC f**	**A+**	**B-**	**D-**
If you think you'd like Hamed to be exciting again, imagine how the suits at HBO feel						
10-23-99	**Paulie Ayala W 12 Sahoiu Sithchai Condo**	**Uni**	**WBA b**	**A**	**B-**	**A-**
Ayala pounds out exciting decision win over tough-as-nails challenger						
10-23-99	**Diego Corrales KO 7 Roberto Garcia**	**Show**	**IBF jl**	**A**	**A+**	**A**
"Chico" survives big hooks early to take title in exciting slugfest						
10-23-99	Mike Tyson No-Contest 1 Orlin Norris	Show	h	A	B-	F
If Norris hadn't been so eager to go down and draw a DQ, he wouldn't have popped his knee						
10-29-99	Jose Spearman Tech. Draw 3 James Crawford	ESPN2	sm	C-	B+	D
Good matchup ends prematurely when headbutt opens hideous cut over Crawford's eye						
10-29-99	Britt Van Buskirk W 4 Dianna Lewis	ESPN2	jw	F	C-	D-
*A painful reminder that not all women fighters are **Playboy** material*						
10-29-99	James Butler KO 7 Bryant Brannon	ESPN2	sm	B	B	C+
An awful bore until three straight left hooks nearly decapitate Brannon						

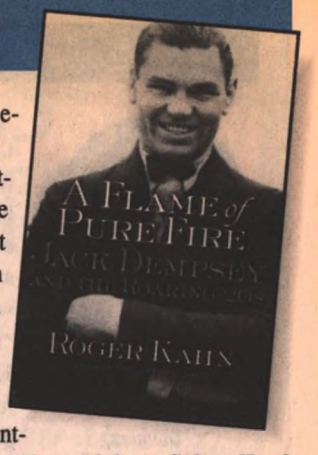
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN–Fox SportsNet; Uni–Univision

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



In his early fighting days, Jack Dempsey briefly went by the ring name "Kid Blackie." The impression inescapably drawn from *A Flame Of Pure Fire: Jack Dempsey And The Roaring '20s* (Harcourt Brace & Co., 474 pages, $28 hardcover) is that "Kid Galahad" would've been more like it, if not a little understated at that as a fitting description of the man well-known sportswriter and author Roger Kahn declares as "the greatest fighter who ever lived."

That's not even the half of it. According to Kahn, Dempsey "lied less than most and beat down the huge bullies the way we all wanted to do when we were children and the way the child in us still wants to do today," and "had a remarkable intelligence, a sure sense of right and wrong, and a compassionate streak that would have graced Mother Teresa."

Fortunately, putting up with such overripe stuff, and with Kahn's persistent and equally cloying insertion of himself in the narrative (as when he spends almost four pages describing his own first ring battle at summer camp) is made worthwhile by his lively and entertaining reportage of the fights and events that made "The Manassa Mauler" the deserving embodiment of the post-World War I era.

Given the nature of those fights and events, it would be virtually impossible to write an uninteresting book about them. But Kahn, probably best known for his earlier elegy to America's National Pasttime called *The Boys Of Summer*, deserves credit in this case for a two-bagger at best because every time his narrative gets rolling, he interrupts it to tell us what he thinks about Warren G. Harding or somebody or something else brought in from left field.

That's more disruptive than writing that Bob Fitzsimmons won the heavyweight title by knocking out Jim Corbett in the eighth round in San Francisco (it was the 14th round in Carson City, Nevada), identifying former featherweight champion Abe Attell as merely "an old lightweight boxer," or lamenting, as Kahn does, that few recognize "how mighty a fighter [Jess] Willard was." Given that last interesting judgment, his dismissiveness toward Harry Wills, who deserved but never got a shot at Dempsey, and his denigration of Gene Tunney, Dempsey's successor, seem curious.

Kahn openly states that Dempsey lost to Tunney in the fabled "Battle Of The Long Count" thanks to a "crooked referee," but stops short of making that charge against the referee who didn't award the title to Luis Firpo after Dempsey was assisted back into the ring, in violation of the rules, in their fight.

For all that, the pluses and minuses add up to a split decision in favor of what is a colorful look at a man who, while perhaps not quite as incandescent as Kahn makes him, surely provided boxing with some of its most shining moments.

—Pete Ehrmann

SO WHO NEEDS A HALL?

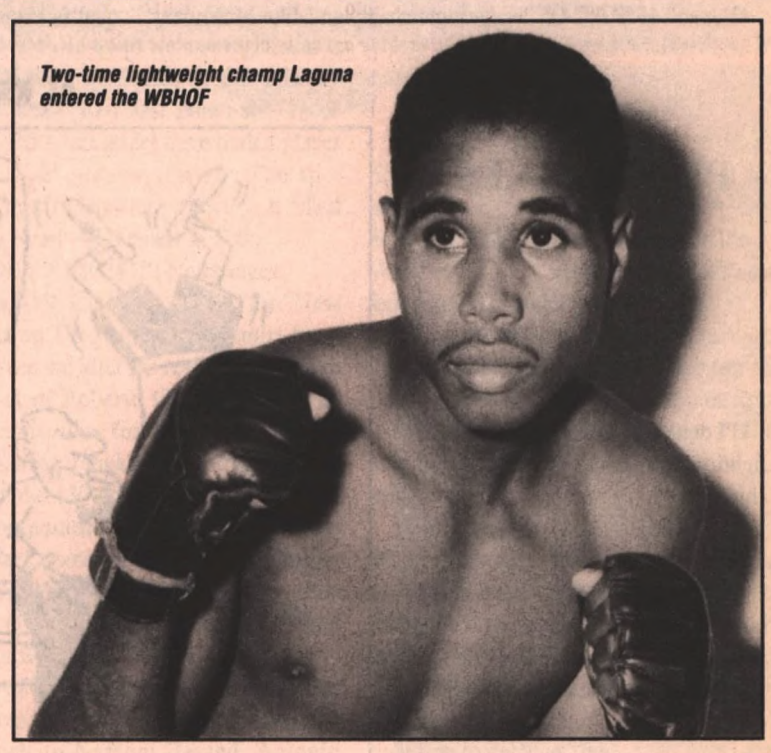
The World Boxing Hall of Fame, which has no exhibition hall but still gets plenty of rank-and-file support, drew nearly 1,000 diners to downtown Los Angeles for its annual banquet, where IBF junior middleweight champion Fernando Vargas accepted the award as Fighter of the Year.

Vargas nearly broke down in tears as he praised his mother during an articulate, witty acceptance speech. "I know I'm 'Ferocious' Fernando Vargas," he explained, "but I do get emotional." Sugar Shane Mosley, last year's honoree, presented him the belt.

Boxers inducted were Khaosai Galaxy, Ismael Laguna, Jose Luis Ramirez, and Joey Barnum. Inducted posthumously were Marcel Thil, Don Jordan, Jackie Wilson, and Peter Jackson.

Inducted in the non-boxer category were referee Larry Rozadilla, matchmaker Bruce Trampler, ring physician Mike DeLuca, and broadcaster and author Harry Carpenter of Great Britian.

—Ivan Goldman



Two-time lightweight champ Laguna entered the WBHOF

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Douglas: Dies at age 59

Ring fatalities continue to plague the sport of boxing, and the latest tragedy is especially maddening because it appears that it may have been avoidable had proper medical help been available. Venezuelan junior featherweight **Carlos Barreto**, a former WBA "interim" champion, died on October 12, three days after slipping into a coma following a 10th-round knockout loss to **Jose Luis Valbuena** in Caracas. As in the case of American super middleweight **Randie Carver**, who was killed in the ring a month earlier, Barreto's demise could have been caused by a combination of his own exhaustion and his opponent's dirty tactics. According to RING correspondent **Joe Koizumi**, who was sitting ringside, Valbuena could have been disqualified for violently throwing Barreto to the canvas in the 10th round, but referee **Tommy Thomas** merely deducted a point, and Valbuena finished off the helpless Barreto. Barreto's mother, **Nora de Barreto**, said her son was rushed to a public hospital, and when he couldn't be treated there because the equipment was not functioning properly, he was taken to another hospital. There, Barreto had to wait three hours for treatment while the hospital confirmed that his family could afford to pay for the treatment. Barreto, 12-2-1 (9), was 23 years old ... Two other deaths to report: **Bill Douglas**, a middleweight and light heavyweight contender in the '70s and the father of former world heavyweight champ **James "Buster" Douglas**, died of colon cancer on October 7 at his home in Columbus, Ohio. Douglas, 59, had a career record of 41-14-1 (31); and 1953 NCAA heavyweight champion **Mike McMurtry** died in Tacoma, Washington, on October 9 at the age of 65. After a stellar amateur career, McMurtry fought professionally just once before being forced to retire with a brain injury ... 'Tis the season to sue **Oscar De La Hoya**. In late-September, the IBF filed a suit against Top Rank, **Bob Arum**, and De La Hoya for failure to pay their $450,000 sanctioning fee for "The Golden Boy's" fight with **Felix Trinidad**. A few weeks later, De La Hoya learned he was also being sued by former manager **Mike Hernandez**, who was dropped by the former champ earlier this year. De La Hoya's attorneys indicated that their client would file a counter suit ... After months of internal struggles, the two factions of the Main Events promotional company finally resolved their battle in early-October. **Kathy Duva**, the widow of former Main Events head **Dan Duva**, now controls the company, while **Lou**, **Dino**, and **Donna Duva** sold their shares and may start up their own promotional company. **Gary Shaw**, a former New Jersey Athletic Control Board member, was named the new chief operating officer of Main Events ... British middleweight **Adrian Dodson** received an 18-month ban from boxing and a $1,600 fine from the British Boxing Board of Control for biting opponent **Alain Bonnamie** in the 12th round of their October 5 fight in London. Dodson was well ahead on points, but very close to being knocked out, when he got desperate in a clinch and sunk his teeth into his Canadian opponent's midsection, bringing an immediate disqualification.

De La Hoya: Getting sued left and right

THE PUNCHLINES

"I was never in the fight. You can't lose more clearly."

—Axel Schulz, after his eighth-round TKO loss to Wladimir Klitschko

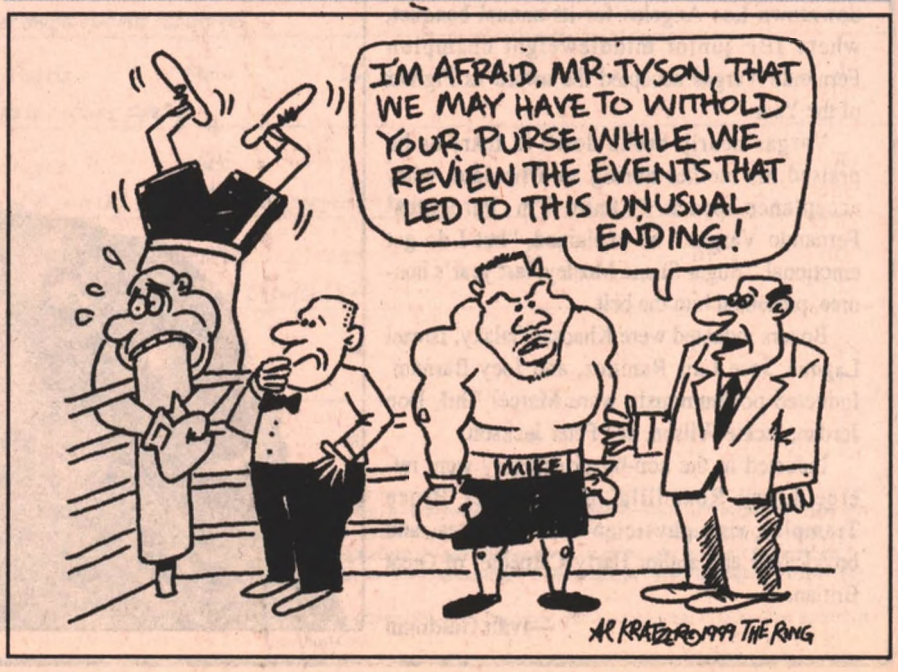
"I don't know why Willy Wise is fighting when he is heir to a potato chip fortune."

—Don King

"I could break every bone in his body and feel no remorse."

—Vinny Pazienza, on Dana Rosenblatt

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended October 31, 1999)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Lightweight
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Welterweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
5. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON** Junior Bantamweight
7. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Junior Flyweight
8. **ERIK MORALES** Junior Featherweight
9. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
10. **STEVE JOHNSTON** Lightweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: European dreadnought Vitaly Klitschko cracks the ratings at number eight after his impressive knockout of Ed Mahone. Hasim Rahman drops a place from eighth to ninth to accommodate Klitschko's arrival, while Chris Byrd (ninth last issue) departs.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Veteran campaigner James Toney is back at number seven following recent wins over Adolpho Washington and Ramon Garbey. Imamu Mayfield, Saul Montana, and Kenny Keene all fall one spot each to eighth, ninth, and 10th, respectively, to make room for Toney, while Carl Thompson (10th last issue) is gone.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: David Telesco moves up from 10th to ninth on the strength of his kayo of Will Taylor, which causes Montell Griffin to slide from ninth to 10th.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Germany's Markus Beyer debuts at number four thanks to his 12-round decision over Richie Woodhall to win the WBC belt. Woodhall sinks from third to eighth, while WBA titlist Byron Mitchell advances from fourth to third. Vinny Pazienza exits to make room for Beyer.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Miguel Angel Gonzalez (eighth last issue) has decided to move up to welterweight, and is therefore no longer rated at 140 pounds. Antonio Diaz (sixth last issue) and Vince Phillips (fifth last issue) have traded places due to Diaz' greater activity. The spot opened up by Gonzalez' defection is filled by Shea Neary, who enters at 10th.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: New IBF champ Diego Corrales jumps from ninth to second after his come-from-behind knockout of Roberto Garcia to take the belt. Garcia slips from second to fourth. South Korean Jongkwon Baek also won a piece of the 130-pound title since the last issue, outpointing Lakva Sim in a close fight. Baek comes aboard at number three, while Sim falls from third to fifth. John Brown (10th last issue) departs to make room for Baek.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Cesar Soto falls from third to fourth after losing the WBC belt to Naseem Hamed. Antonio Cermeno (eighth last issue) is gone from the 126-pounds ratings because he has decided to campaign as a junior feather. On the other hand, Mbulelo Botile has moved up to featherweight, where he holds down the 10th spot.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: As noted above, Botile's gone, and Cermeno is back, at number eight.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Yeosam Choi crashes the ratings at number two after winning the WBC title from longtime holder Saman Sorjaturong, who plunges from second to fifth. Jorge Arce (10th last issue) leaves to make room for Choi.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Noel Arambulet enters at number four after winning the vacant WBA title with a 12-round decision over Joma Gamboa. Daniel Reyes (10th last issue) exits to make room for Arambulet.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Naseem Hamed (ninth last issue) is history, thanks to his horrible, foul-infested performance against Cesar Soto, the latest in a string of weak showings. This bumps Bernard Hopkins up from 10th to ninth and makes room for WBC lightweight champion Steve Johnston to debut at 10th. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended October 31, 1999

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

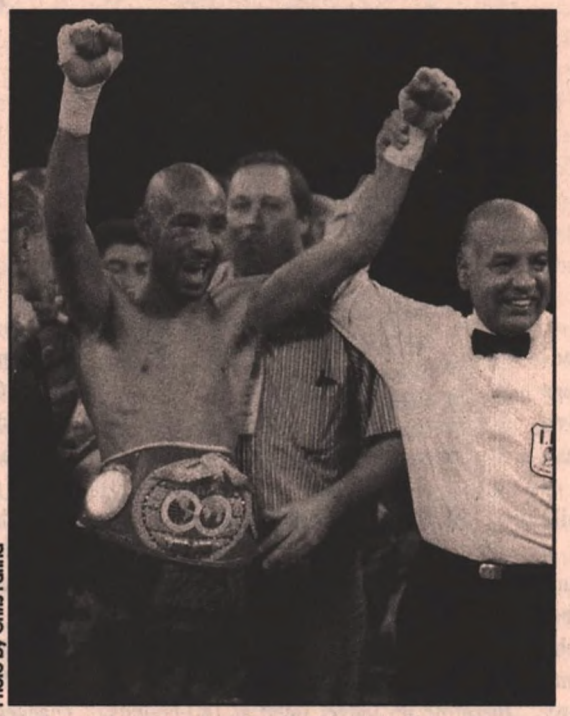


Photo by Chris Farina

Diego Corrales claimed the number two spot at junior lightweight by dethroning Roberto Garcia

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England 34-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA 36-3-1 (WBA/IBF Champ)
3. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX 20-0
4. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA 30-0
5. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ 35-1
6. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY 46-3
7. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL 34-3
8. **VITALY KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 26-0
9. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD 31-1
10. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada 28-0-1

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 17-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **DAVID REID** Philadelphia, PA 14-0 (WBA Champ)
3. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI** France 38-3-1
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain 46-4 (WBC Champ)
5. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia 18-0
6. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico 73-3
7. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL 39-2
8. **KEITH MULLINGS** Brooklyn, NY 16-6-1
9. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI 38-2
10. **TONY MARSHALL** Albany, NY 33-7-6

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED** England 33-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO 35-0-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **VUYANI BUNGU** South Africa 37-2
4. **CESAR SOTO** Mexico 53-8-2
5. **LUISITO ESPINOSA** Philippines 44-8
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 29-2
7. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico 56-10 (IBF Champ)
8. **JULIO PABLO CHACON** Argentina 34-0
9. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ** Hartford, CT 17-0
10. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa 25-1

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico 35-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico 49-2
3. **NESTOR GARZA** Mexico 36-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa 29-1-1 (IBF Champ)
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** Las Vegas, NV 23-3
6. **KENNEDY McKINNEY** Memphis, TN 34-4-1
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico 25-1-1
8. **ANTONIO CERMENO** Venezuela 34-3
9. **CARLOS NAVARRO** Los Angeles, CA 19-0
10. **JUAN CARLOS RAMIREZ** Mexico 17-2

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH 19-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX 29-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM 46-1-2
4. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 23-1 (WBC Champ)
5. **NANA KONADU** Ghana 40-4-1
6. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** Colombia 42-1
7. **JULIO GAMBOA** Nicaragua 24-4
8. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico 32-1-1
9. **DARIO AZUAGA** Paraguay 44-0-1
10. **DANNY ROMERO** Albuquerque, MN 35-3-1

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany *28-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France *40-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan *22-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England *35-12-1*
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina *28-3-1*
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL *32-5-1*
7. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV *58-4-2*
8. **IMAMU MAYFIELD**
   New Brunswick, NJ *19-2*
9. **SAUL MONTANA**
   Mexico *33-6*
10. **KENNY KEENE**
    Emmett, ID *46-3*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL *40-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany *41-0*
3. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany *40-4-1*
4. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY *28-2*
5. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX *39-6-1*
6. **MICHAEL NUNN**
   Davenport, IA *54-4*
7. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA *17-0-1*
8. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL *14-0*
9. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY *23-2*
10. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
    Chicago, IL *38-3*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales *27-0*
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany *16-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL *20-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany *17-0 (WBC Champ)*
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA *34-6*
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX *36-6*
7. **FRANKIE LILES**
   N. Hollywood, CA *32-3*
8. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
   England *25-2*
9. **ROBIN REID**
   England *26-2-1*
10. **MADS LARSEN**
    Denmark *30-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA *35-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. *28-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. *34-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France *27-3-1*
5. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA *22-2-1*
6. **OTIS GRANT**
   Canada *31-2-1*
7. **ROBERT McCRACKEN**
   England *33-0*
8. **JASON MATTHEWS**
   England *21-1*
9. **DAVEY HILTON**
   Canada *37-1-3*
10. **BERT SCHENK**
    Germany *23-0*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *36-0 (IBF/WBC Champ)*
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *31-1*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *34-1-1*
4. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA *25-3 (WBA Champ)*
5. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *41-3-1*
6. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *33-0*
7. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA *30-0*
8. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico *42-4-2*
9. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *48-3-1*
10. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
    Australia *25-0-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. *25-2 (WBA Champ)*
2. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *23-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO *22-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY *21-0*
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA *28-2*
6. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV *39-4*
7. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL *19-0*
8. **MICKEY WARD**
   Lowell, MA *34-9*
9. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *30-4*
10. **SHEA NEARY**
    England *22-0*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *28-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN *28-4-1*
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA *27-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico *35-3-1*
5. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA *28-3*
6. **STEFANO ZOFF**
   Italy *28-6-2 (WBA Champ)*
7. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France *41-1-2*
8. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England *29-1*
9. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN**
   Uzbekistan *27-0*
10. **ISRAEL CARDONA**
    Hartford, CT *31-3*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA *29-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea *21-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *32-1*
5. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia *11-2-1*
6. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *25-3-1*
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX *28-1*
8. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil *21-0*
9. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL *32-4*
10. **GOYO VARGAS**
    Mexico *39-6-1*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *38-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea *16-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **HIDEKI TODAKA**
   Japan *15-2-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela *33-7-3*
5. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *40-2-2*
6. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand *18-1-1*
7. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia *31-0*
8. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
   Thailand *35-4*
9. **JOEL LUNA-ZARATE**
   Mexico *32-3-2*
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI *22-0*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **SORNPICHAI KRATCHINGDAENG**
   Thailand *17-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **MEDGOEN 3K-BATTERY**
   Thailand *19-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia *21-0*
4. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand *34-2*
5. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia *23-0 (IBF Champ)*
6. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela *32-7-1*
7. **HUGO SOTO**
   Argentina *50-6-2*
8. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela *25-5*
9. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *33-1*
10. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
    Mexico *40-3*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico *48-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **YEOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea *21-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua *25-1-1*
4. **PICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *21-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *40-3-1*
6. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa *50-10-2*
7. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *57-6-4*
8. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN *14-2-1*
9. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines *25-4-1*
10. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
    Phoenix, AZ *49-4*

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa *14-2-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WANDEE CHOR CHAREON**
   Thailand *23-3 (WBC Champ)*
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *39-1*
4. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela *11-1-1(WBA Champ)*
5. **SONGKRAM PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *20-2-1*
6. **ROCKY LIN**
   Philippines *26-2*
7. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico *20-1-1*
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Columbia *31-2*
9. **ANDY TABANAS**
   Philippines *35-3-1*
10. **OSWALDO GUERRERO**
    Mexico *26-5*

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NEW FACES

FATHI MISSAOUI

Junior Middleweight

By Joe Santoliquito

PRO RECORD

1998		
Nov. 6	Eugene Senegal, Montreal, Quebec	KO 3
Nov. 27	Jerry Villareal, Montreal	KO 2
1999		
March 3	Brent Schroeder, Montreal	KO 3
May 28	Andre Blaise, Montreal	KO 2
June 29	John Lockett, Montreal	W 6
Sept. 9	Todd Black, Halifax, Nova Scotia	KO 1
Oct. 13	Gilberto Flores, Montreal	W 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
7	7	0	0	5

No tape fizzled in Yvon Michel's hands, yet he faced a mission *almost* impossible when Hans Muhlegg, president and owner of InterBox, asked him to find quality boxers for the Canada-based promotional company. Muhlegg wanted Michel to recruit "the new Oscar De La Hoya," which was close to saying "go out and find the new Hope Diamond."

The InterBox general manager recalled, however, this one gem of a boxer from Tunisia. He had a good punch, and when Michel was coaching the Canadian national team, none of his fighters wanted to draw this guy. He was not exactly "The Golden Boy," but his skills were similar, and anything near De La Hoya was a bonus.

Fathi Missaoui grew up one of 10 kids raised by a father who worked in a paper company. Boxing took him everywhere, including the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, where he won a bronze medal as a welterweight for Tunisia. After meeting Michel, Missaoui's next stop was Montreal, Canada.

Missaoui is no Golden Boy (who is?), but so far the marriage between he and InterBox has worked out fine. The 6' junior middleweight has a 7-0 professional record, with five knockouts. He's presently fighting eight-round bouts, displaying good boxing skills and excellent power. Ambition and confidence are also qualities Missaoui possesses. Though it's still early in his pro career, Missaoui is anxious for a title shot. He is constantly running into Michel's office, begging him to arrange it.

"I give myself a year-and-a-half to two years to become a world champion," Missaoui said in French, using Michel as his interpreter.

"I'm always begging Michel to get a world title shot or the Canadian championship. I would like to face [IBF junior middle champ] Fernando Vargas or [WBA super welterweight champ] David Reid. I watch Vargas and Reid carefully. I saw all of them in the Olympic Games, and felt then I was at least as good as they were. I have a big, big heart and I'm very focused. I have all the abilities, and the overall package. I know I'm going to be better."

And Michel knows, too. But the one-time trainer also knows champions take time to develop. Michel is fully aware of Missaoui's capabilities, having seen enough of Missaoui in the amateurs.

"I remember our guys were always afraid to draw Fathi, because they knew he was a puncher and had a very aggressive style with

(Continued on page 64)

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Welcome . . . Pound for pound great Oscar De La Hoya shares a few stories at banquet.

FIST CASTING

Everlasting. . . A fist cast by Sugar Ray Leonard.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Hawk Time . . . Aaron Pryor enjoys parade route in famous fist pose.

Perfect 10 . . . Hollywood star Bo Derek greets parade spectators.

CELEBRITY BOXING NIGHT

Fight Night . . . Greg Haugen eyes opponent in action-packed bout at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Road Work . . . Livingstone Bramble (l) crosses finish line, while Angel Manfredy (r) maintains a steady stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

Alumni . . . (left) Basilio and Leonard pose for an alumni photo. Promoter Bob Arum (right) delivers his 1999 Induction speech on Museum Grounds.

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Stars . . . Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Hector "Macho" Camacho pose for reception guests.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Conditioning . . . Christy Martin and Angel Manfredy focus during workout sessions for public on Museum Grounds as Sugar Shane Mosley poses for the fans.

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

COMMON GROUND

This autumn, the world of sports seemed to provide even more fodder for debate than usual. We lost a legendary giant who took turns playing the role of hero and villain, watched drunken pigskin fans applaud the sight of a seriously injured opponent, and learned that corporate sponsors had found yet another way to intrude on the national pastime. Hockey and basketball even created a mini stir by rewriting not their record books, but their rulebooks.

Some thought-provoking stuff, but all those goings-on in the other sports actually got *me* thinking of the Sweet Science. How so? Take a look:

Superfight that never happened: "The Greatest" vs. "Wilt The Stilt"

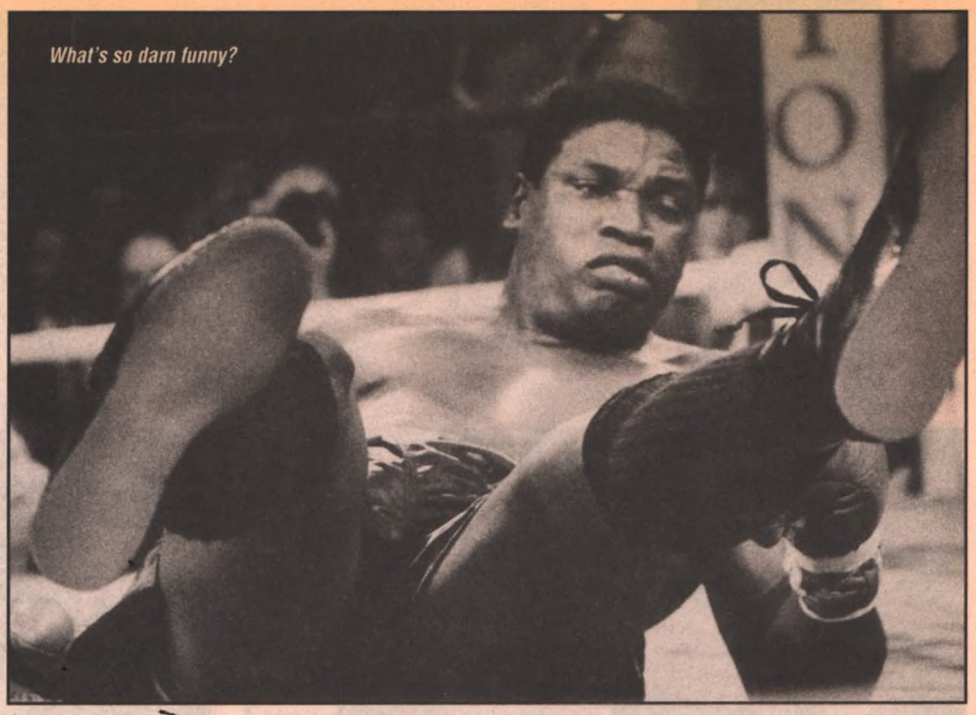
1) Wilt Chamberlain dies: "Wilt The Stilt," an incredible physical specimen who once scored 100 points in a game and averaged 50 for a season, died in October of congestive heart failure. He was 63.

Chamberlain was a remarkable athlete who excelled at track and field and volleyball in addition to roundball. At 7'1", and with a reach that extended across two time zones, how would he have done as a fighter? For a while, it looked as though we'd find out. In 1967, and again in '71, a Chamberlain-Muhammad Ali bout was proposed for the Houston Astrodome. One of Ali's demands was that Chamberlain shave his goatee because, "The Greatest" said, he didn't want to fight "a billy goat."

"There were posters and a press conference, and the promoters were serious about hustling it," Angelo Dundee, Ali's former trainer, told me. "[In '71] I think Wilt was just using boxing to get a better contract from the Lakers. Wilt's reach was going to be the selling point. I once asked him, 'Which knee is your bad one?' He said, 'Why?' I said, 'I don't know if I should tell Muhammad to throw the left hook at your right knee or the right cross at your left knee.' Wilt was a nice guy. He ended up signing a new contract, and the fight never came off."

Asked how he thought an Ali-Chamberlain clash would have unfolded, Dundee responded with one word: "Timmmberrr!"

2) Philadelphia fans cheer Michael



What's so darn funny?

Irvin's injury: In a game against the Eagles at Veterans Stadium, the Dallas Cowboys' wide receiver hit his head on the artificial turf and was down and out for several minutes. A large number of fans cheered when Irvin crumpled. Then, in the spirit of brotherly love, they joyously erupted again when a stretcher was being wheeled onto the field for him. And for the next week or so, talk radio had a topic it could beat into the ground.

It strikes me as interesting that crowds routinely cheer the sight of wounded boxers, and it's considered to be just part of the game, not an example of society going all to hell. Fans are always leaping out of their seats when a fighter is wobbled, then cheering wildly when the guy crashes to the deck. Remember all the whooping and laughing in the audience when a dazed Trevor Berbick couldn't find his legs after Mike Tyson floored him? Yours truly was part of the Madison Square Garden crowd watching Oscar De La Hoya-Julio Cesar Chavez I on closed-circuit TV in '96. The atmosphere that night was surprisingly sedate until Chavez turned toward the camera and a river of blood was suddenly visible on his face. Then, the crowd went bonkers.

What does all this say about the human condition? Maybe nothing deeper than that violent sports stir passions. Especially on a day when business is brisk for the beer vendors.

3) Serena Williams wants to challenge a man: The U.S. Open tennis champion with the howitzer groundstrokes has concluded that overpowering women is getting a bit boring. So Williams says she'd like to take on a man in the new millennium's version of Billie Jean King vs. Bobby Riggs.

We're assuming, of course, that it was King-Riggs that gave Williams this idea for an inter-gender faceoff, and not Margaret McGregor's decision win over Loi Chow in a woman vs. man boxing match. Now whose crazy idea was *that*? What, exactly, did it prove that a woman with boxing skills was able to outpunch a man who lacked them? When Christy Martin kicks Angel Manfredy's ass, then I'll be impressed. (Note to you bloodthirsty promoters who have already conceived of Martin-Manfredy and are looking for a little validation: I'm only kidding.)

4) The NBA and NHL implement new rules: Among them, hockey teams now skate four-on-four, as opposed to five-on-five, during overtime, and basketball defenders are no longer allowed to put a hand or forearm on an opponent who is dribble-driving to the basket.

In the context of hockey and hoops, those are considered significant changes. Maybe boxing can follow those leads, blow the dust off its rulebook, get out the red pencil, and do some editing of its own. For starters, eliminate the 10-point must scoring system and go back to rounds scoring with a *supplemental* points system. Adios, also, to the nutty rule that says a fighter who is cut by an accidental butt loses if the fight is stopped after four rounds and he's trailing on the cards.

And how about an overtime round to break a tie? You heard me right. If a ringside official keeps a running total of the scores throughout the fight, and handlers aren't permitted to flood the ring at the conclusion of the 12th, the delay between rounds 12 and 13 should be no longer than two minutes. Thus, the fighters won't be in danger of cooling down. You have to admit that it sure would be fun to hear HBO's Jim Lampley shouting, "And now Mosley rallies with 45 seconds left in regulation time!"

5) Baseball's San Diego Padres plan to sell "presenting rights": Just when you thought that it couldn't get any worse than baseball fields with Gap ads in the gap and hockey rinks with advertisers' logos painted on the ice, along comes this. What are presenting rights? Well, when the Padres take the field for home games next season, the public address announcer is going to say something like, "And here are your San Diego Padres, presented by the Such-and-Such Corporation." Heaven help us.

Boxing already has sponsors' logos on its canvas and turnbuckles, and many of its events are "brought to you by" big companies. So if it wants to lure more ad dollars, the fight game is going to have to get more creative. Offer Madison Avenue a bigger canvas, no pun intended.

Here are some suggestions: a) Get Mia St. John to advertise on her breasts (everybody's attention is riveted on them anyway), b) sell ad space on fighters' gloves (David Tua can yell, "This Bud's for you!" as he whacks a guy with a mitt that says "Bud" on it. A featherfist like Stevie Johnston, on the other hand, might wear the "Bud Light" gloves), or c) turn fighters into actual walking billboards. Tyson can shave messages into his head, Michael Grant into his beard, and Frans Botha into his chest hair. Heck, in the hands of the right plastic surgeon, maybe the scar tissue above Arturo Gatti's eyes can be molded into a Nike swoosh.

Just do it. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

As further proof of how easy it is to become a champion these days, six-year-old Randy Tauares recently won a WBA title without ever having a fight! Actually, WBA super welter champ David Reid was just letting the youngster try the belt on after a workout at the St. Elizabeth's School in Washington Heights, New York, as part of the Inner-City Scholarship Fund's Principal For A Day program.

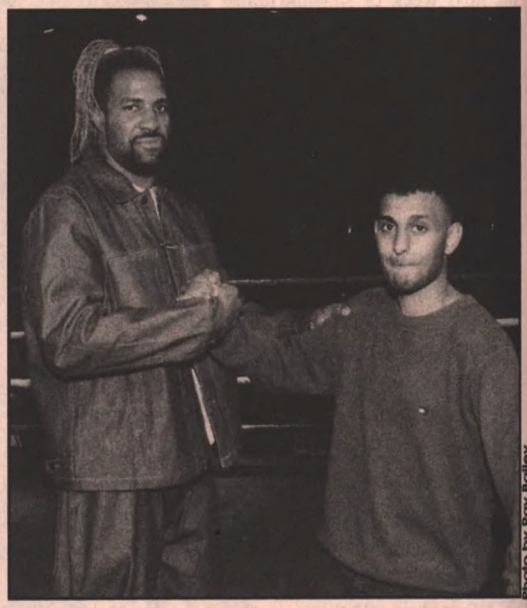


Photo by Ray Bailey

Two of Emanuel Steward's top pupils, Shannon Briggs and Naseem Hamed, recently got together to exchange advice. "Maybe you should cut off those dreadlocks and see if you can make cruiserweight," Naz suggested. "Maybe you should cut off your ears and fight as a strawweight," Briggs proposed in return.

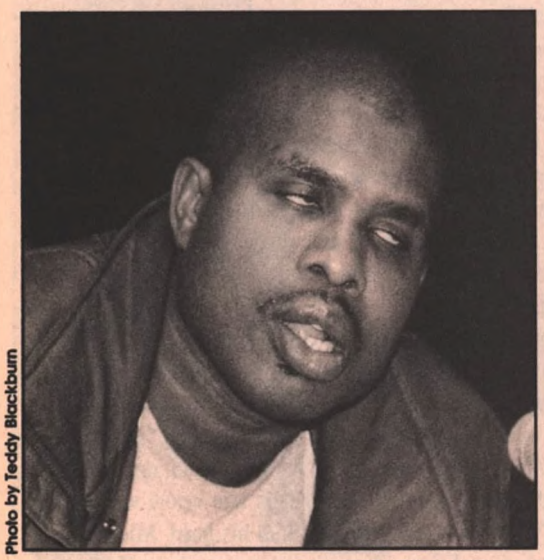


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Stop the fight ... before it begins! Razor Ruddock had a look on his face that begged for the referee's intervention prior to his October fight with Jose Ribalta. Ruddock fought a lot better than he looked, as he ended up knocking Ribalta out in the first round.

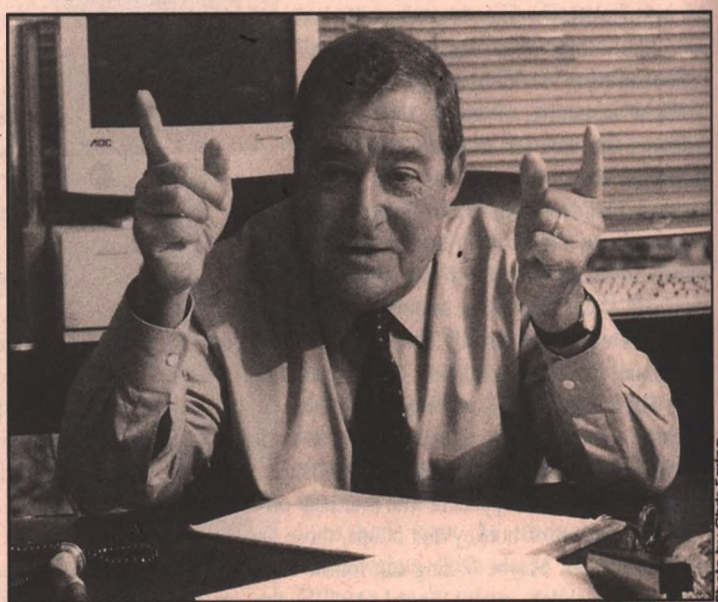


Photo by Chris Farina

No, promoter Bob Arum isn't bragging about his sexual prowess. He's depicting the size of his Excedrin headache the morning after the Felix Trinidad-Oscar De La Hoya fight.

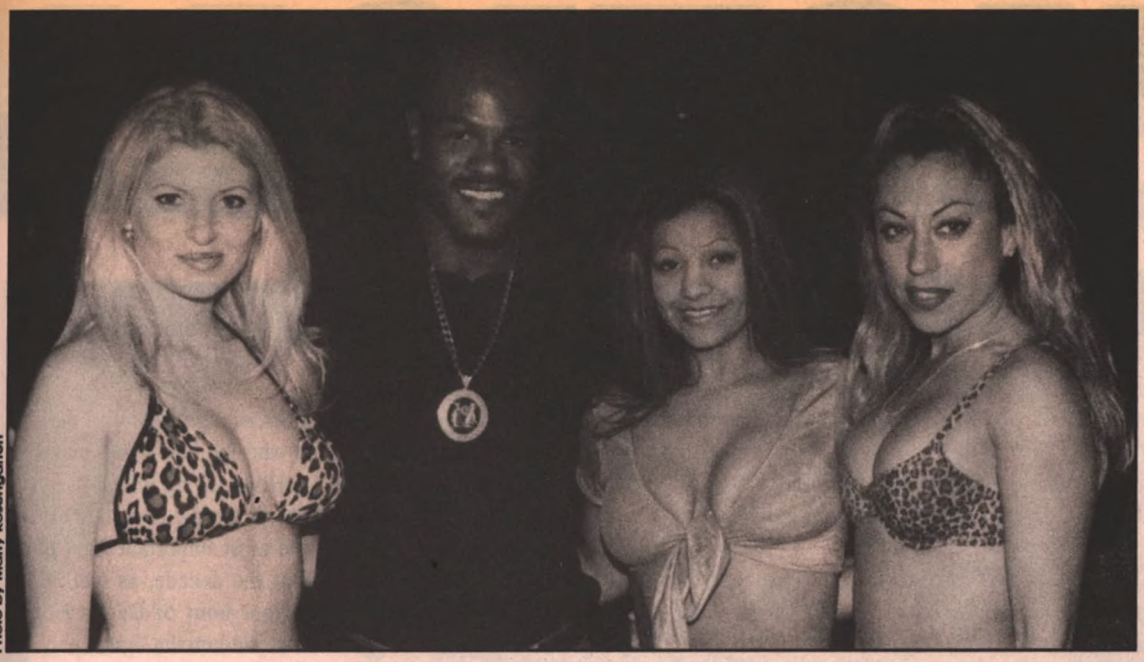


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Former 154-pound champion Terry Norris is learning that retired life isn't so bad after all. "Terrible Terry" enjoyed the company of a few round card girls at the Shane Mosley-Wilfredo Rivera fight in September.

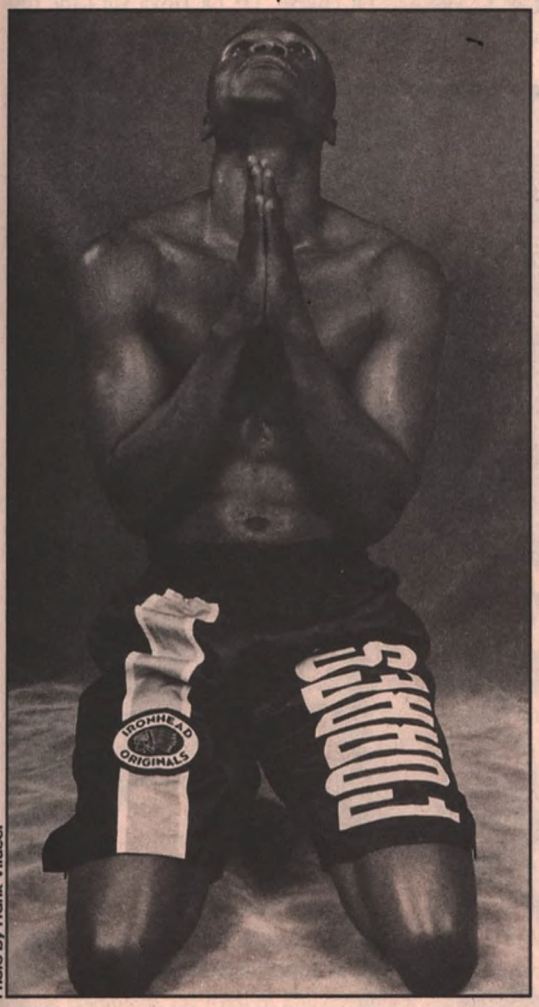


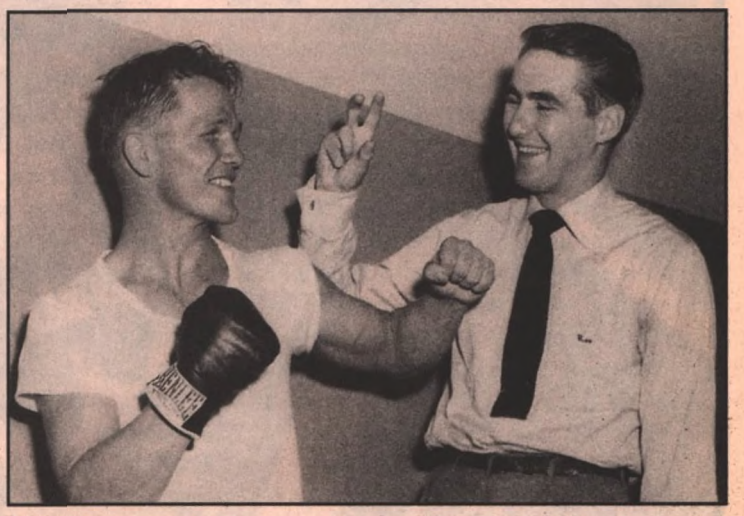
Photo by Frank Vitucci

Welterweight Vernon Forrest, who is undefeated after seven years as a pro, still hasn't gotten a world title shot, so he's turning to a higher power and praying. Unfortunately, the almighty dollar seems to mean more than the Almighty Himself to the alphabet boys, none of whom had Forrest ranked among their top three as of press time.

Two of the all-time legends of the ring, Muhammad Ali and Carmen Basilio, shared a moment at the professional debut of Ali's daughter, Laila, in October. Both Hall of Famers agreed they, too, could still knock out April Fowler within 30 seconds.

Photo by Teddy Blackburn

NOSTALGIA CORNER



In this photo from 1948, middleweight champ Tony Zale and Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher Rex Barney engage in a heated game of scissors-paper-rock. Barney had thrown a no-hitter the day before, but his luck ran out against "The Man Of Steel" because, as we all know, rock smashes scissors.

TACTICAL BLUNDERS!

(At Least De La Hoya's In Good Company)

By William Dettloff

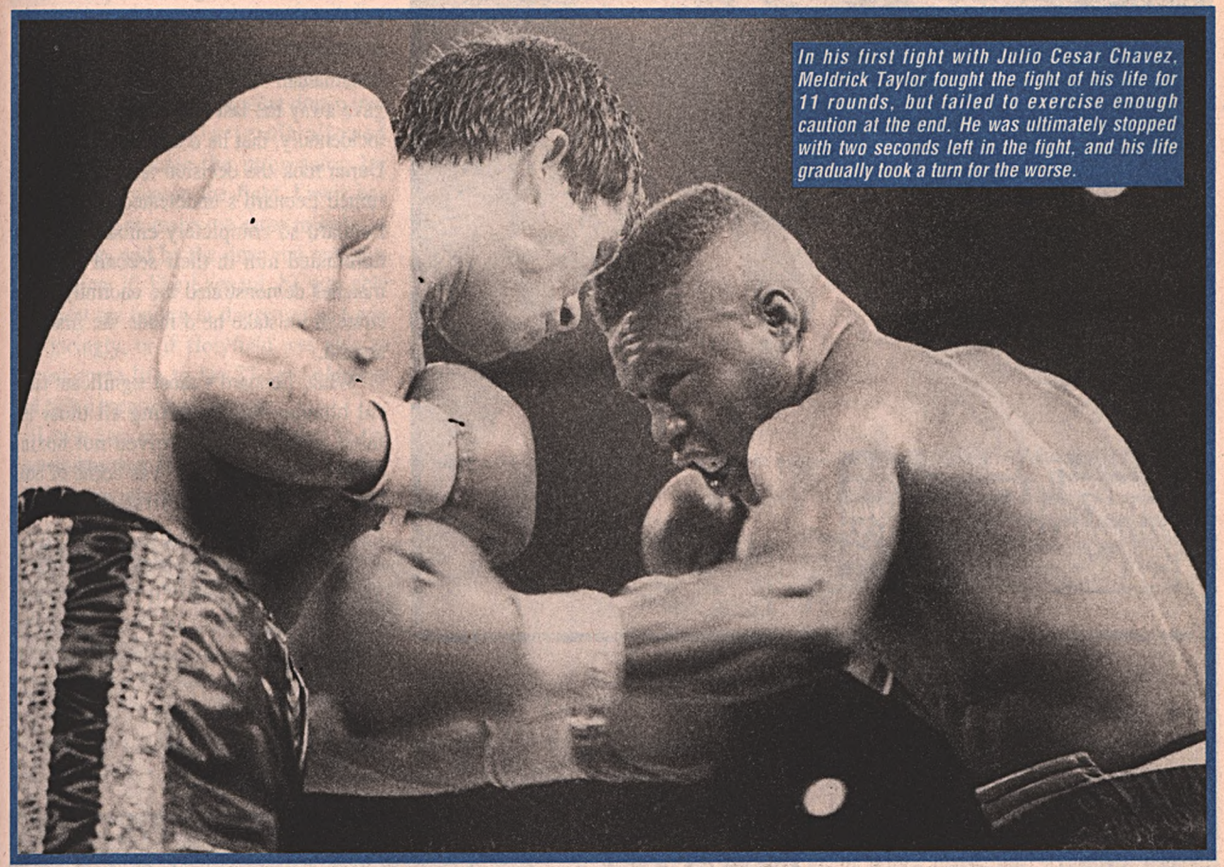
In the minutes, hours, and days following Felix Trinidad's victory over Oscar De La Hoya in September, a constant refrain could be heard from both Trinidad and De La Hoya fans alike: Oscar blew it. He boxed Trinidad silly for what seemed like most of the fight and then simply stopped punching, opening the door for Trinidad to make up lost ground. Some said afterward that he tired, but that wasn't it. He coasted because, heck, why risk getting clobbered when you're a mile ahead?

It doesn't matter if you think, as roughly 90 percent of the ringside press did, that De La Hoya's early work was good enough to get him the victory. It goes down in the books as "Trinidad W 12 De La Hoya," and 30 years from now no one will remember, or care, who won the early rounds and who the late. What matters is that De La Hoya, along with his corner, made a colossal tactical error in what was arguably the most important fight of the latter half of the decade, as well as the most important bout of De La Hoya's career. And it cost him the fight.

Of course, De La Hoya isn't the first fighter to drop one he should have won because he made the wrong decision. Guys who make their living in the fight game know that although this is largely an exercise of the mind and body, choosing the right tactics and making good decisions at the right times win as many fights as do heart and desire and a well-practiced left jab. Titles and careers and million-dollar purses have been won and lost on mid-fight errors in judgment. Ask Meldrick Taylor.

Thinking he was too far ahead on the scorecards to be caught, Oscar De La Hoya handed the closing rounds to Felix Trinidad, and in so doing, lost his unbeaten record. De La Hoya's strategy of boxing and running backfired, so he claims he's going to turn brawler in the rematch.

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

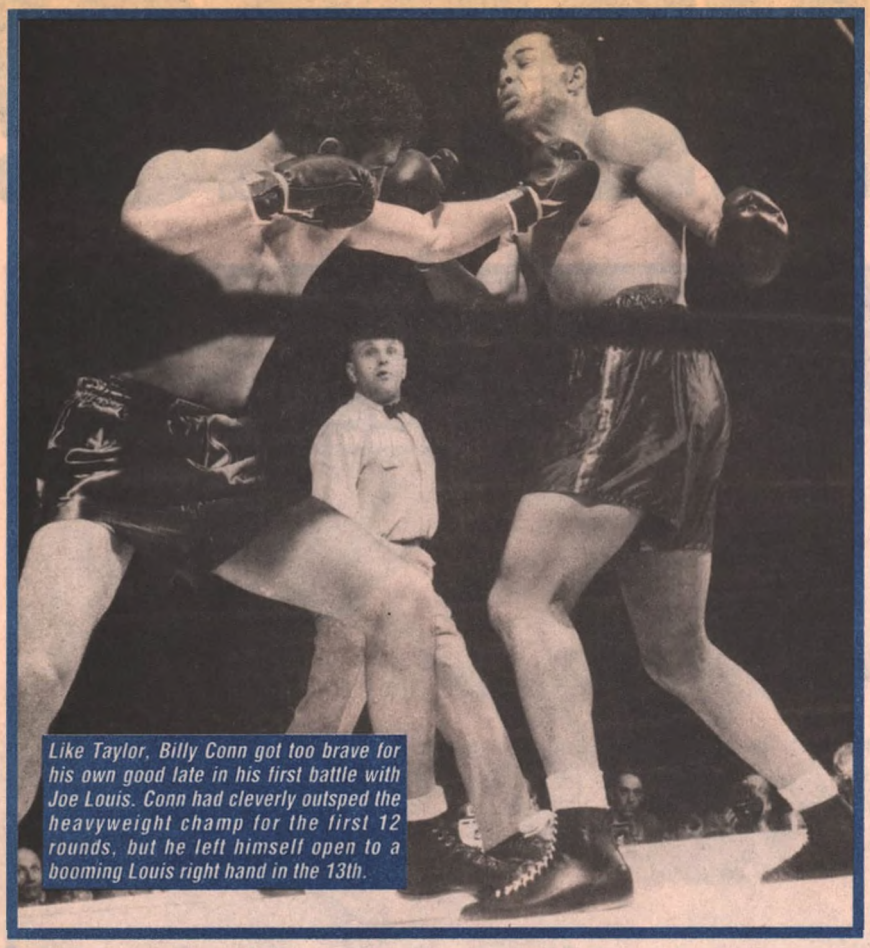


In his first fight with Julio Cesar Chavez, Meldrick Taylor fought the fight of his life for 11 rounds, but failed to exercise enough caution at the end. He was ultimately stopped with two seconds left in the fight, and his life gradually took a turn for the worse.

Going into his battle with a near-prime Julio Cesar Chavez in March of 1990, Taylor was an undefeated junior welterweight champion, the toast of Philadelphia, and one of the three or four best fighters in the world. But to get recognition as the best, he had to get past "The Lion Of Culiacan," and after 11 rounds of sustained brilliance, he was just about there.

Combining wicked hand speed, smart movement, and a warrior's heart, Taylor led on two of the three cards going into the last round, and all he had to do was stay upright. Run, clinch, cartwheel across the damned ring, it didn't matter, as long as he stayed off the canvas. But he couldn't do it. He had too much Philadelphia in him and he stayed right in Chavez' range, giving him a chance. Tactical mistake. Chavez' right hand caught him with 16 seconds left, and 14 ticks of the clock later, Taylor was watching through glassy eyes as Richard Steele stopped it. You can say Steele made a lousy call, but if Taylor had made the right decision, maybe he'd be comfortably retired now, maybe even on his way to Canastota, instead of begging for commissions to sanction him for fights against guys you've never heard of but who stand a good chance of whipping him nonetheless.

Taylor shares much in common with Billy Conn, who made it to the Hall of Fame despite having recorded perhaps the most celebrated strategic blunder in ring history. You know by now the story of Conn's epic, June '41 struggle with Joe Louis, a fight that going in, Conn had virtually no chance of winning. In the first place he was more middleweight than light heavy and couldn't punch to save his life, even against 175-pounders. How would he last against the mighty Louis, who at this point had already recorded 17 defenses of the heavyweight title? He could last by using his one advantage, which was speed, and over the first 11 rounds he outfoxed the methodical Louis at every turn. He outmaneuvered him and outjabbed him and



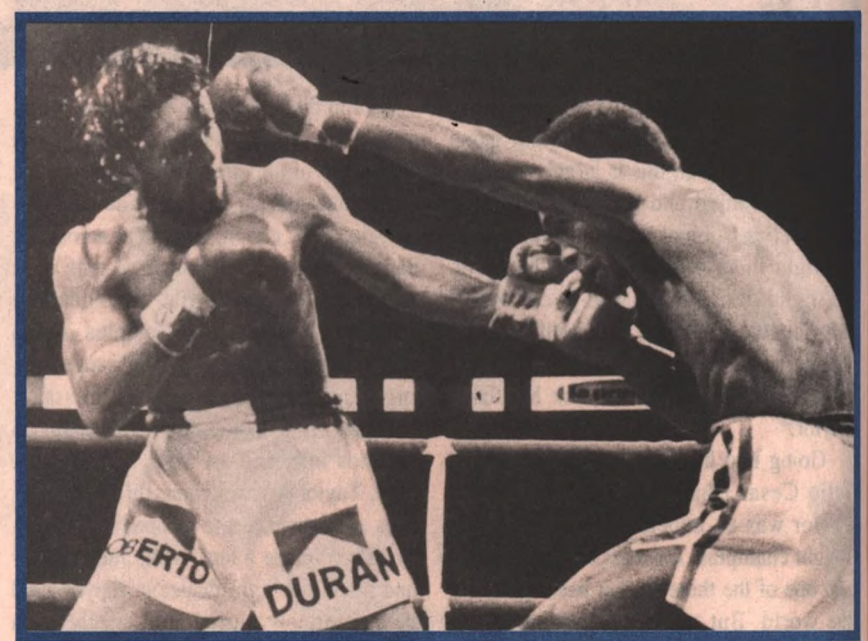
Like Taylor, Billy Conn got too brave for his own good late in his first battle with Joe Louis. Conn had cleverly outsped the heavyweight champ for the first 12 rounds, but he left himself open to a booming Louis right hand in the 13th.

never stood still long enough for Louis to crack him. Then in the 12th, he staggered Louis with a hook. "I miss that," he would later confess, "I beat him." Entering the 13th, Conn led on the cards 7-5, 7-4-1, and 6-6, and ignored his corner's instructions to keep boxing. He said to hell with it and tried to take Louis out, and you know how it went from there.

Neither Taylor nor Conn were able to make up for their lapses in sound judgment in subsequent rematches—both were kayoed rather uneventfully—but Sugar Ray Leonard was able to after choosing the worst possible strategy in his first meeting with Roberto Duran in '80 in Montreal. Going in, you couldn't blame Leonard for choosing to stay inside against Duran rather than using the gazelle-like speed that had carried him to an undefeated record and the WBC welterweight title. He was younger than Duran, and bigger and faster. Duran was a lightweight, after all, who had spent most of his career crushing 135-pound guys, and in his few fights at welter, he'd struggled a bit to score knockouts. Never one to lack confidence, Leonard knew he could beat Duran at his own game.

He was wrong. In the trenches, Duran was king, all elbows, shoulders, and uppercuts. He rocked Leonard early and mauled him in the corners, smothering him, then stepping back and launching two-fisted combinations. At any time Leonard could have changed strategies and used those million-dollar legs, but he was convinced he was the stronger fighter and besides, Duran was an arrogant, nasty SOB, and Leonard wanted to knock him out. All that machismo played right into the Panamanian's hands, and even after Duran gave away the last two rounds, convinced, incidentally, that he'd done enough to win, Duran took the decision and the title, and ruined Leonard's undefeated record. That Leonard so completely embarrassed and dominated him in their second and third matches demonstrated the enormity of the strategic mistake he'd made the first time around.

While Leonard's most significant tactical blunder—not counting all those ill-fated comebacks—involved not boxing enough, Lennox Lewis' was borne of boxing too much in his first match with Evander Holyfield. It's true that the stench from the draw that was rendered in Madison Square Garden that night still emanates throughout the fight game, but Lewis' refusal to slug more and peck less made the verdict somewhat more palatable. Lewis never strayed from the jab-and-box fight plan scripted by Emanuel Steward, even after it was obvious to any-



The decision to slug it out with in the trenches with former lightweight champion Roberto Duran resulted in Sugar Ray Leonard's first professional defeat when the pair met in Montreal in 1980. Leonard changed his methods and easily won their next two bouts.

one watching that Holyfield had nothing in the tank and no Plan B after his prediction of a third-round knockout fell flat, giving atheists around the world cause to celebrate.

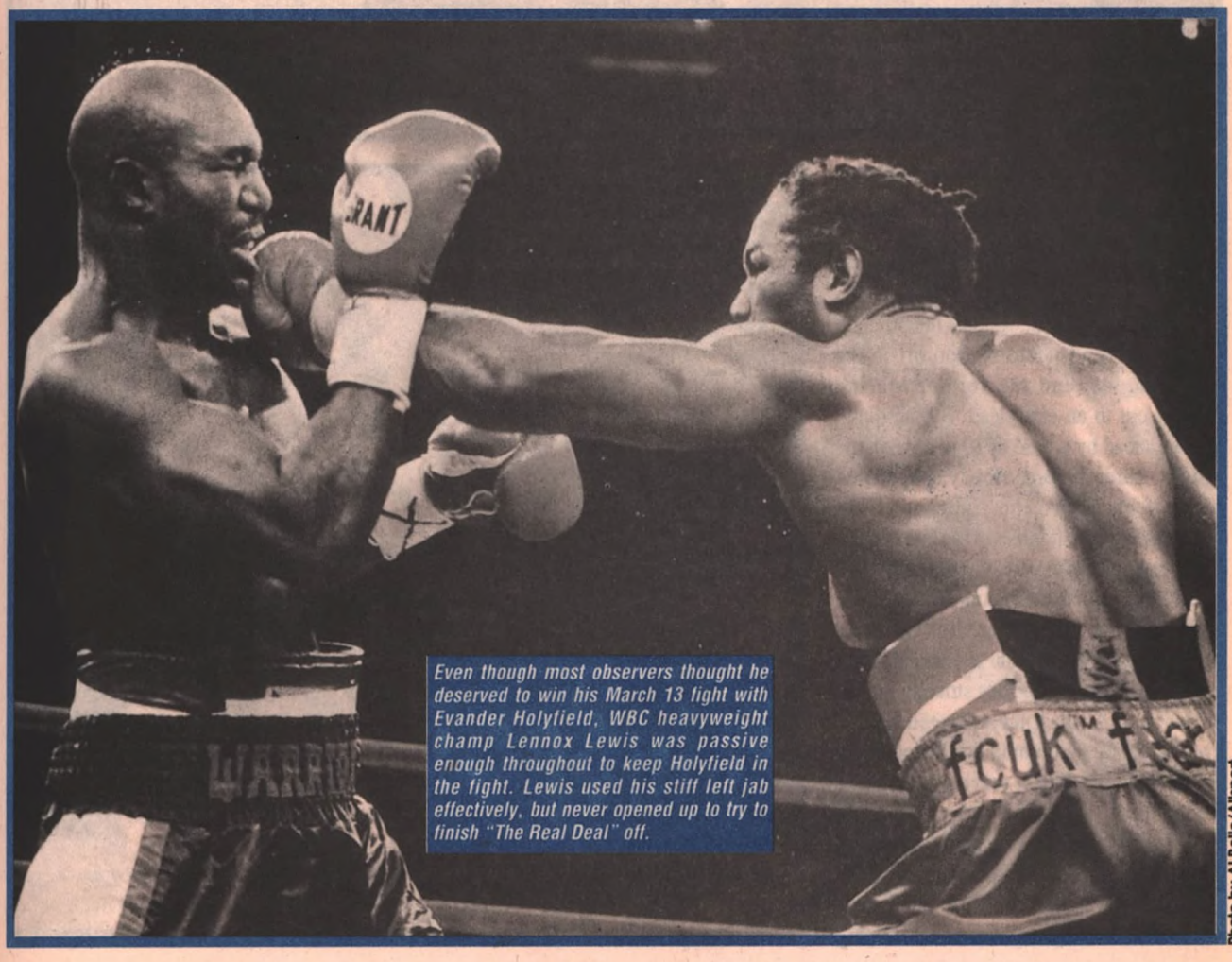
Lewis landed the jab whenever he wanted, and as any good trainer will tell you, if you can land the jab, you can land just about anything you please after it. But Lewis—who, by the way, towers over Holyfield and outweighed him by 31 pounds—was set on not getting drawn into a slugfest, and as a result allowed Holyfield to create the impression for some that he was in the fight. Lewis has promised not to make the same mistake in the rematch, and by the time you read this you'll know if, like Leonard, he was able to correct his failing in the return and win convincingly, or if Holyfield was able to restore some life to his 37-year-old legs and gain a measure of revenge.

Lewis can at least take comfort in the knowledge that his strategic lapse didn't cost him the title he came in with. You can be certain that Michael Moorer wished he could say the same thing after his own tactical disaster led to his knockout loss to George Foreman in '94. If there was ever a fight in which the strategy was clear, it was this one. Everyone knew that Big George's only chance was to catch Moorer a good one, and considering that Moorer was younger, faster, fresher, and more active, the chance of that happening was unlikely as long as Moorer did the right things and made the right decisions.

Foreman hadn't fought since dropping a decision a year-and-a-half earlier to Tommy Morrison, of all people, which is all you need to know about his standing as a top heavyweight at the time. Moorer's defense of the IBF and WBA titles against him was considered a low-risk fight, and that Foreman got the shot at all said more about his talent as a salesman than as a fighter.

For 9½ rounds, Moorer made Foreman look awful. Jab after jab bounced off his shaven head, and when Moorer felt like coming across with the left, that landed, too. The 45-year-old Foreman swelled up and huffed and puffed and got little business done outside that familiar jab, but he gritted his teeth and trudged toward Moorer round after round. And in between every round, Teddy Atlas would tell Moorer to move away from Foreman's only chance, the big right hand. And every round, Moorer would go out and move directly into its path. What did he have to lose? He had tasted a few of those rights and withstood them. Tactics, shmactics; he knew what he was doing. The one Foreman was looking for all night finally found the sweet spot halfway through the 10th, and Moorer collapsed in a heap, an ex-champion in the time it took for referee Joe Cortez to count to 10.

Ken Norton, another Foreman victim, though from another era, also suffered a debilitating loss at the hands of a tactical misstep. To this day you'll find plenty of people who insist that he beat Muhammad Ali outright in their rubber match in



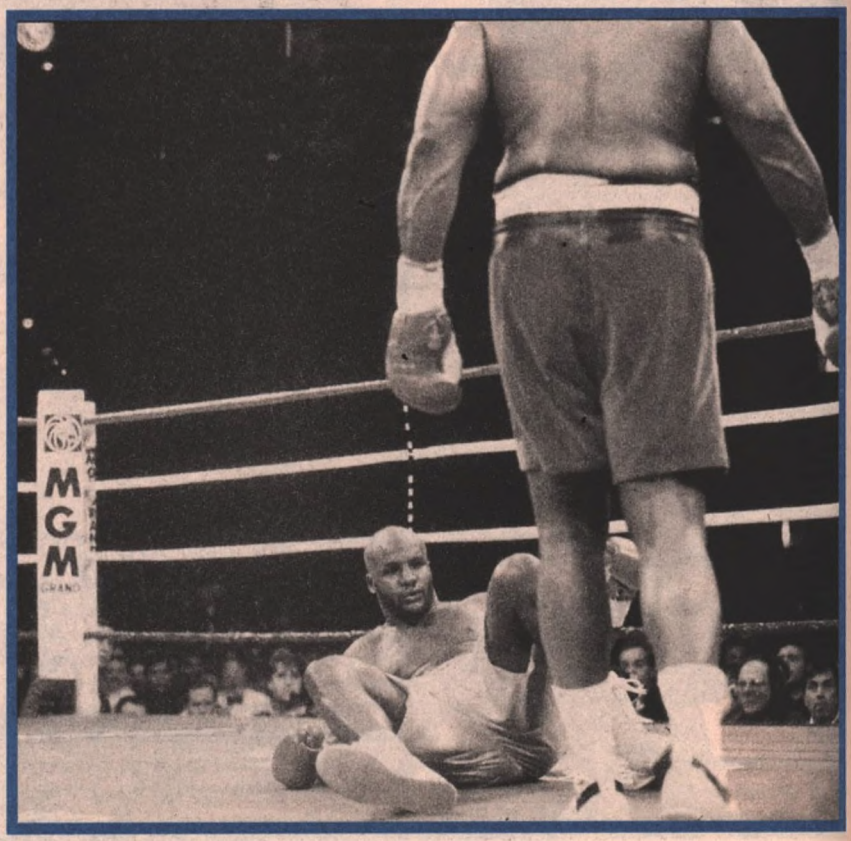
Even though most observers thought he deserved to win his March 13 fight with Evander Holyfield, WBC heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis was passive enough throughout to keep Holyfield in the fight. Lewis used his stiff left jab effectively, but never opened up to try to finish "The Real Deal" off.

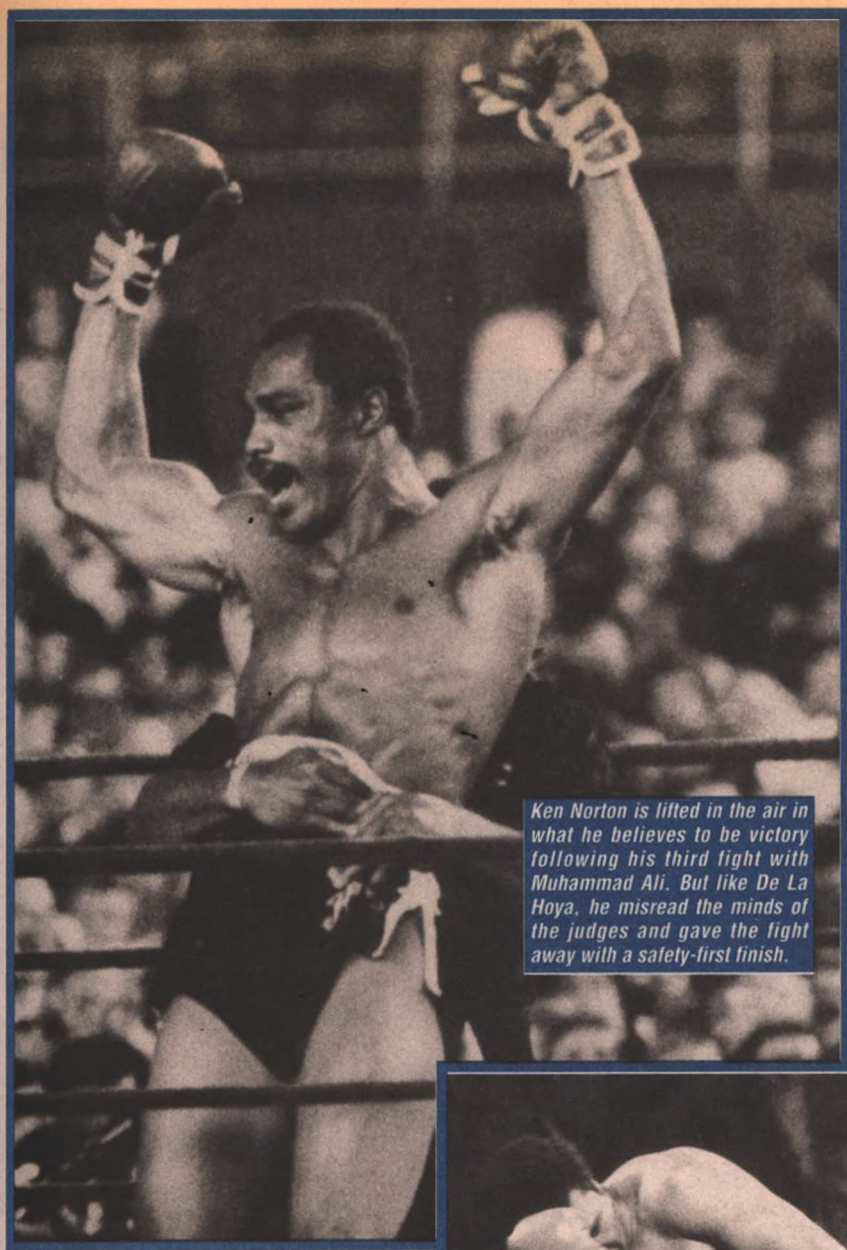
Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Michael Moorer was doing a job on George Foreman for the first nine rounds of their 1994 classic, but got careless and ended up losing the heavyweight title via 10th-round knockout (below).

Yankee Stadium in '76, and if not for his mistaken belief that he was well ahead on points going into the 15th round, he'd have gotten the decision so many thought he deserved.

At age 34, Ali had neither the strength nor the energy to hold Norton off in the early rounds, and the former Marine jumped out to an early lead. By the ninth, he was ahead by a total of 10 rounds on the judges' cards before, slowly, Ali willed himself back into the fight, dancing, snaking out the left jab, and rattling Norton with straight rights. By the 14th, the old master had pulled even, and only the 15th would decide the winner. But Norton's corner told him he was far ahead and to not take any chances, a curious strategy indeed considering Ali had never floored him or even seriously hurt him in the 38 combined rounds they had fought previously. It made little sense to Norton—"I could have fought the whole three minutes all-out and won it easily," he said afterward—but he listened anyway and did little but follow Ali around the ring for the first 2:30, eating





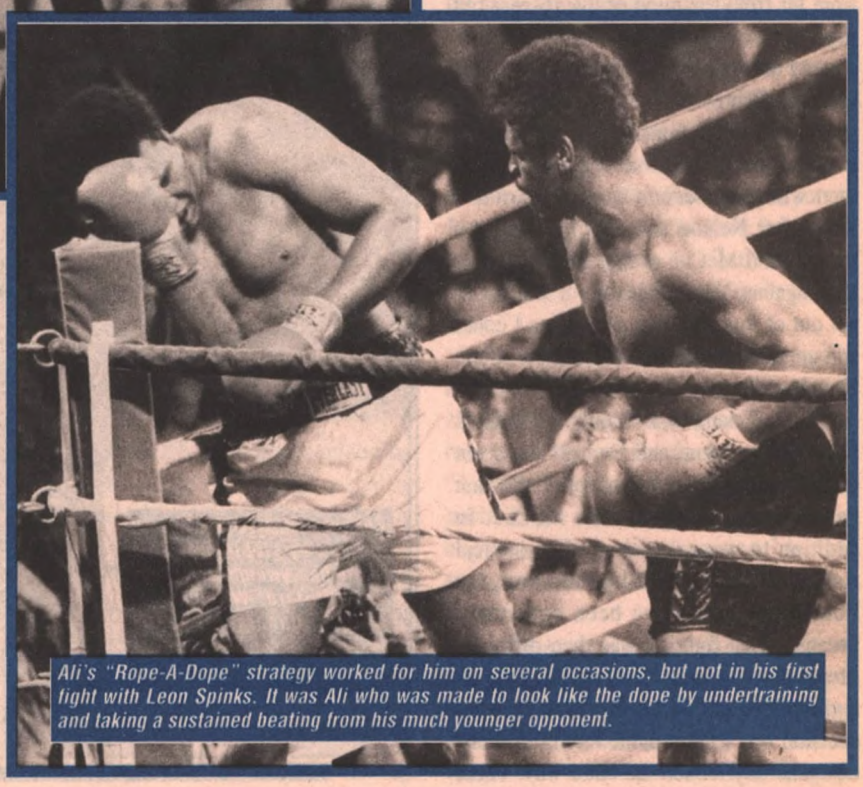
Ken Norton is lifted in the air in what he believes to be victory following his third fight with Muhammad Ali. But like De La Hoya, he misread the minds of the judges and gave the fight away with a safety-first finish.

jabs and posturing to the crowd. For the hell of it, he opened up in the last 30 seconds, but it was too late. Deserved or not, Ali took the round and the unanimous decision by scores of 8-6-1 and 8-7 (twice).

Ali wasn't always the fortunate beneficiary of another's tactical shortcoming. He went to the "Rope-A-Dope" well once too often in his fight with neophyte Leon Spinks in '78, and it cost him a pounding and the title. By that time Ali was 36 and no great dancer, so he relied almost exclusively on his ability to lie on the ropes and allow slower, more ponderous fighters to wail away while he conserved energy for a late-rounds assault. It worked magic for him against Foreman in Zaire, of course, and he used it throughout the '70s against such sluggers as Ron Lyle, Earnie Shavers, and anyone else who found themselves unable to resist what appeared to be an easy target. Once in a while they caught on and refused to follow him to the ropes—Lyle, in particular, resisted the con before getting stopped in the 11th—but Ali was certain young Spinks would take the bait. So certain he didn't train a lick.

He was right. Spinks followed him to the ropes, and when Ali took that familiar position, Spinks wailed away. And wailed. And wailed. Ali kept waiting for him to tire so he could make his move. By the 11th, Spinks was still wailing away with no end in sight, and Ali knew his favorite strategy wouldn't work on this night. So he mounted his attack, but Spinks stayed right with him and right on him. Ali, exhausted and battered, fought back hard, but Spinks was too young and too hungry, and not even Ali's legend could help him. Ali took back the title seven months later, of course, employing a perfect jab-right-clinch strategy that tied poor Spinks up in knots. Ali was a smart fighter and knew not to commit another tactical blunder.

De La Hoya is smart, too. He and Trinidad will rematch eventually. When they do, don't expect "The Golden Boy" to make the same mistake twice. ■



Ali's "Rope-A-Dope" strategy worked for him on several occasions, but not in his first fight with Leon Spinks. It was Ali who was made to look like the dope by undertraining and taking a sustained beating from his much younger opponent.

MATTY McCUE:

A FEATHERWEIGHT WITH A HEAVYWEIGHT BURDEN

By Pete Ehrmann & Bill Schutte

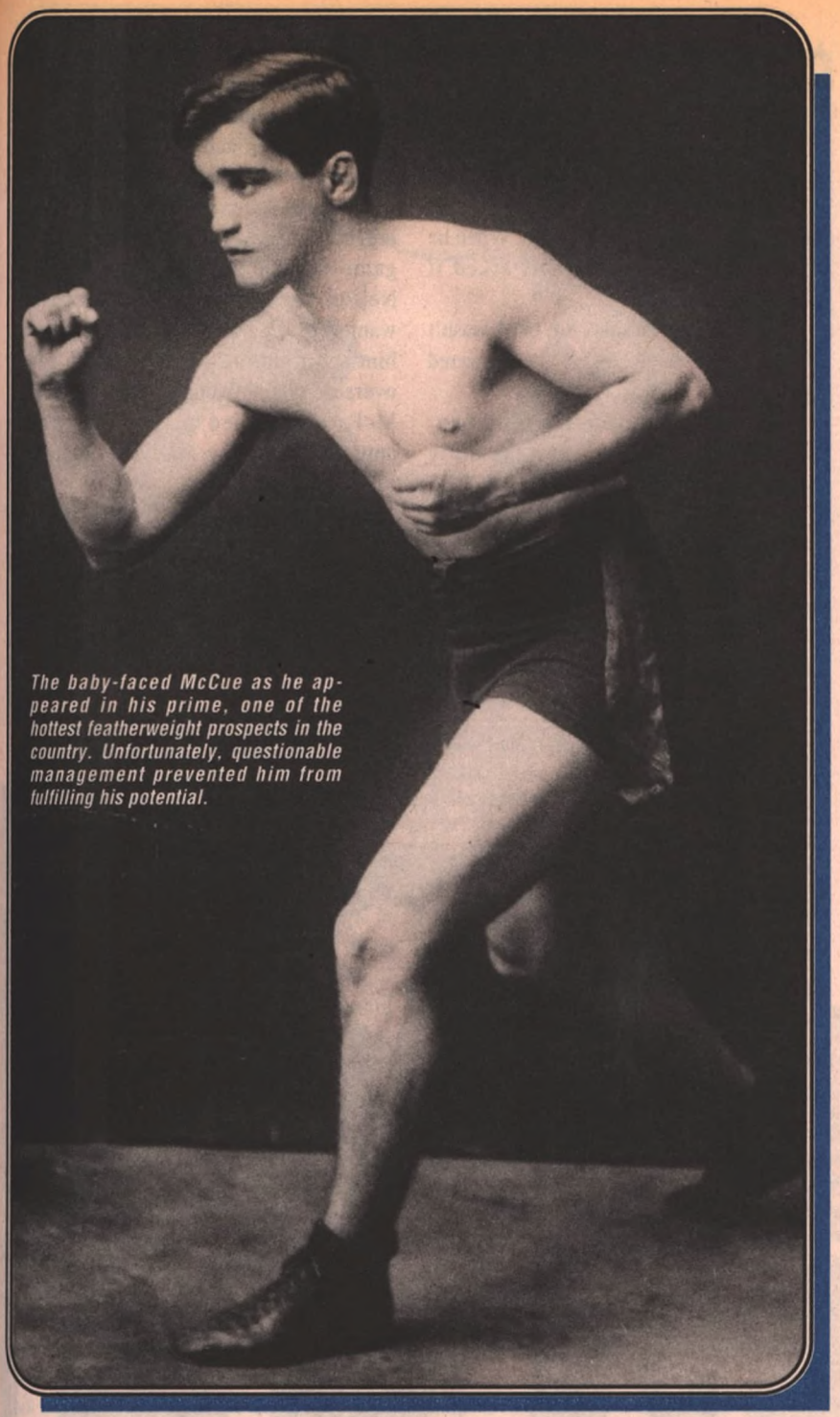
Racine is an industrial city on the western shore of Lake Michigan about 20 miles south of Milwaukee. Probably the best-known item manufactured in what is known as the Belle City is a floor-care product called Johnson's Wax, but about 85 years ago, Racine was getting attention for the wax job its most famous home-grown boxer gave some of the top featherweights and lightweights of the era.

Don't look for the name Matty McCue on the roster of past world champions. He never made it. But it was due in part to McCue that his stablemate Jess Willard became champion, and the Racine boxer might have made it himself if he, Willard, and the man who managed them had never hooked up. Such considerations, however, were far from the mind of the 16-year-old high school sophomore when McCue entered the ring for the first of his 85 professional fights.

"I remember thinking of my parents between the first and second rounds, and then when the second session started, I went after Nelson and stopped him in a hurry," said McCue of that July 28, 1911, bout against Young Nelson. "I wanted to get out of that ring just as soon as I could and get home before the folks knew where I had been."

His real name was Matthew Poulson, but to throw Mom and Dad off the scent of his new career, he adopted the last name of his manager, John McCue. In addition to worrying about the physical risk to their 5'3", 120-pound son, the Poulsons would have been concerned because prize fighting was then officially illegal in Wisconsin, although as long as fights were called exhibitions, and no decision was rendered, the Racine authorities generally looked the other way. There

The diminutive McCue is hoisted by stablemate and future heavyweight champion Jess Willard. Without McCue's financial support, Willard may never have become champion.



The baby-faced McCue as he appeared in his prime, one of the hottest featherweight prospects in the country. Unfortunately, questionable management prevented him from fulfilling his potential.

were also matches held before a select clientele, and it was no exhibition when McCue met Billy Kautz in his first 10-rounder the following December. By the eighth round, the floor was slippery from their blood, and several squeamish spectators left the building so as not to make it worse by involuntarily contributing the contents of their stomachs.

By then, young McCue was only answering ring bells, and not the school kind. If his parents were disappointed by his decision to drop out of high school to box full-time, they got over it as their boy began to make his mark with his fists.

"In one way I would like to see Matty back in school," said Paul Poulson, his father, in 1913, "but when on the other hand, he is gaining experience in the ring game that he could not get in school. He is learning how to assimilate hard knocks with a smile, and what real sportsmanship is. The reports that I receive of Matty's clean fighting and his gentlemanly conduct mean almost as much to me as his victories."

In his 27th fight, and his first one against a name opponent, the 17-year-old McCue knocked down former world bantamweight champion Harry Forbes—fighting for the 130th time, although the widely reported bout is strangely absent from his official record—in the fourth and ninth rounds, and had him down for good when the bell ended their August 29, 1912, fight.

Due to the sport's precarious standing with the authorities, who could move in and shut a promotion down, crowds didn't exactly flock to public shows in those days. When McCue boxed Milwaukee's Freddie Andrews to a no-decision at the Union Park Pavillion in November, so few customers were on hand to witness what one newspaper called "the speediest 10-round battle seen in Racine in many a day" that the local hero fought for nothing because the $50 in the till just barely covered Andrews' guaranteed purse.

But such was his growing popularity that within months crowds of more than 300 were turning out to watch the teenage sensation train. In the spring of 1913, McCue went on a tear in which he knocked out nine opponents in a row, and his fame spread beyond the Belle City.

"Few boxers of recent years have attracted as much attention in this part of the country as little Matty McCue of Racine," wrote famous Chicago boxing columnist and referee Ed W. Smith. "He is a featherweight with a heavyweight punch. Just where he conceals the force behind his punch doesn't appear on his frame when stripped for the ring, but the mule kick is there."

After McCue knocked out Andrews in a rematch, the latter's manager, Teddy Murphy, who put Battling Nelson on the road to the lightweight championship, said, "A brilliant future in the ring can be safely predicted for the lad if nothing unforeseen happens. He has not gained his full strength as yet, and when he does, look out for him."

In those days, the standard against whom all lighter-weight boxers were measured was "Terrible" Terry McGovern, who'd held the bantamweight and featherweight titles around the turn of the century.

McCue trains in Racine, Wisconsin, for his first major bout, against England's Jeff O'Connell in 1913. McCue delighted his hometown fans by scoring a first-round knockout.

When McCue stopped Young Sharkey for his ninth straight kayo, headlines proclaimed him to be "Terry McGovern Reincarnated." A star had truly arrived. Veteran Joe Homeland knew it, but grabbed a match with McCue anyway.

"I should worry?" said the laid-back Homeland. "I can only go down as far as the cellar. You know, we ain't boxing on the roof."

Homeland was laid out in the fourth, although it could have been stopped in the third, when Homeland was down twice and could barely find his way back to his corner. McCue's four previous victims had each gone out in round three, leading McCue fans to start chanting, "This is your round!" at the other guy when the bell rang for the third.

For all that, the Belle City bomber was considered the underdog when McCue went up against another fast-rising featherweight star named Jeff O'Connell. A native of Great Britain, O'Connell had fought all over the United States and battled Ad Wolgast to a draw. He had never been stopped and, according to the *Nashville American*, was "foxy and has mastered all the tricks of the ring and uses them to good advantage."

He never got the chance against McCue. On May 15, 1913, before more than 3,000 fans at Racine's Lakeside Auditorium, including the mayor and other city fathers, McCue knocked O'Connell down about 20 seconds after the first bell, and then five more times before finishing him at 1:52 of the opening round. When he was revived, O'Connell was asked if McCue was a great fighter.

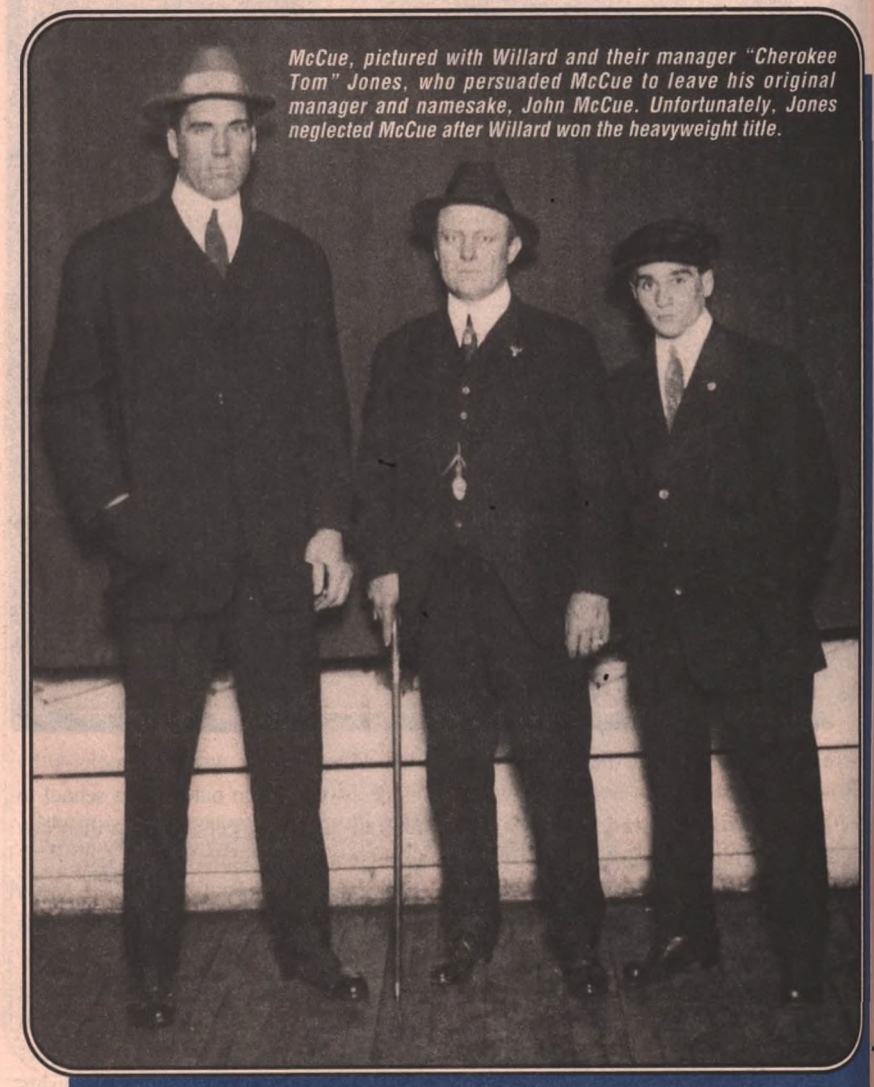
"I would have to think so, but I wasn't around long enough to say," he answered truthfully.

Johnny Coulon, the reigning bantamweight champion, was certainly impressed with McCue.

"Why, they told me he was a right-handed puncher and that his wallop was about all he had," said Coulon. "A right hand, indeed! That's the last thing that should be considered about him. He's got one of the best left hands that I ever saw, and this, to my mind, is what really makes him a really great fighter and the sure making of a champion. I've never seen a young fighter handle himself in better shape, with better judgment, and with such high skills as Matty McCue."

It's no wonder, then, that some of the biggest and best-known managers in the game came sniffing around. Battling Nelson, the former lightweight champ, wanted McCue to tour the country with him and fight on his cards. Emil Thiry, overseer of lightweight contender Packy McFarland, tried a straightforward approach in urging Matty to ditch John McCue in favor of him.

But John McCue was "like a father to him," said Matty, who knocked out Tommy Dougherty in the first legal fight held in his hometown after passage of the 1913 bill that allowed boxing in Wisconsin, and then did what nobody else,



McCue, pictured with Willard and their manager "Cherokee Tom" Jones, who persuaded McCue to leave his original manager and namesake, John McCue. Unfortunately, Jones neglected McCue after Willard won the heavyweight title.

Featherweight champion Johnny Kilbane (right) promised McCue a shot at the title if he could first get past Kilbane's sparring partner, Cal Delaney (left). But the best McCue could manage was a draw, and he never got a crack at the title.

including Nelson, Johnny Kilbane, and Johnny Dundee had accomplished by knocking out Young Togo, who the newspapers referred to as "The Demon Jap."

Kilbane was the featherweight champion then, and it was said that the only way to get a match with him was by first beating his friend, sparring partner, and watchdog, Cal Delaney. Sure enough, the champion told McCue in a telegram, "Lick Delaney, and I will give you a bout."

The surprise fans got on October 28, 1913, when their idol, seeming strangely listless, earned no better than a draw with Delaney, was trumped by the astonishment engendered a few days later by the announcement that Matty was forsaking his namesake manager on the grounds that John McCue "had taken him as high up the ladder as he was capable of doing, and that it was time the break occurred before he started going backwards." Some reports hinted that the partnership had been shaky for a while, and that Matty's resolve to make a change hardened when John McCue had him spar 16 rounds the night before the fight.

Enter Thomas Edward Jones, also known as "Cherokee Tom" and "the maker of champions." Jones had earned the latter nickname and his reputation as one of boxing's sharpest operatives by steering Billy Papke and "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson to the middleweight title, and making Wolgast, whom he still managed, the lightweight champion.

"Mark my words," said Jones upon taking over stewardship of the Racine fighter's career, "Matty McCue is going to be a great fighter. He'll be champion in a year or so."

Jones' first official acts were to announce that McCue was moving up to the lightweight class—no more working out on the eve of a fight to sweat down to 122 pounds—and to send the boxer to the hospital for an operation on his nose to enlarge the airways.

"I noticed in the Delaney fight that he did not breathe freely," said the manager.

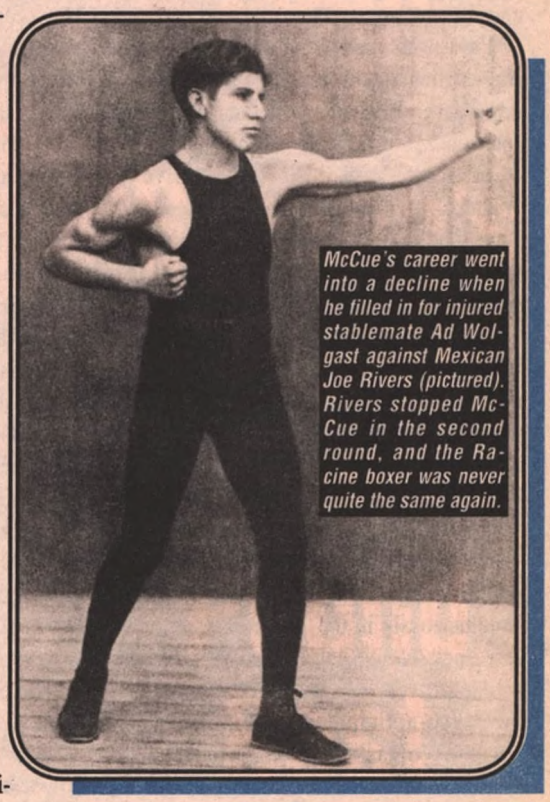
All Jones' other fighters had the same procedure done, including the one McCue met the first time in his Chicago hospital room as he came to following the operation. It must have been a shock to wake up and see 6'6¼", 240-pound Jess Willard standing there, but McCue and his new stablemate got along just fine.

"I liked Jess," McCue told an interviewer years later, "and afterward, we had our pictures taken together in Chicago."

McCue and Wolgast got along fine, too, even though their workouts might have given the opposite impression. When McCue returned to Racine for his first fight under Jones, against Tommy Bresnahan, reporters noted the black eye he sported, and speculated that it was payback for a widely reported knockdown McCue had scored against the former champion earlier in the week. While the newspaper decision went to McCue, officially, it was another no-decision.

McCue even adopted Wolgast's odd defensive posture, which involved crouching down and wrapping his arms around his head as he moved in to punch. He and Bresnahan put up two great fights, and McCue looked sensational in subsequent 10-rounders against Joe White and Joe Mandot. Once again, McCue got the unofficial nod from the newspapers in no-decision affairs.

When John McCue was in charge, Matty usually fought several times a



McCue's career went into a decline when he filled in for injured stablemate Ad Wolgast against Mexican Joe Rivers (pictured). Rivers stopped McCue in the second round, and the Racine boxer was never quite the same again.

month. Jones thought that too rigorous a pace for an 18-year-old. Thus, when McCue was offered a fight with Kilbane just eight days after his upset of White (who held a win over Kilbane), Jones said no. Eyebrows also went up when he approved the Mandot fight, although McCue did well in the bout that most reporters judged a draw, and afterward, Jones said that his man's performance "proves once and for all that in another six months, he will be licking all of them."

But Jones had a lot of fighters under his care. Wolgast was still a top draw, and wanted the lightweight title back. And there was also the leviathan Willard. Ever since Jack Johnson had won the heavyweight championship in 1908, there had been a frantic search for a "White Hope" to restore sport's grandest title to Caucasian ownership. Willard's size was in his favor, but the fact was that he didn't have much in the way of fighting skills. He was so unimpressive that in spite of the giant's pigmentation, Jones was having trouble moving Willard to the forefront, and the effort it required was draining the coffers.

Former lightweight champion Wolgast fought on too long and ended up at a Los Angeles mental hospital, where he's pictured here. McCue, on the other hand, got out of the fight game at the age of 23.

To their rescue came the stable's Lilliputian. McCue gave Jones $400, a considerable sum in those days, to keep the Willard train fueled and chugging along. His assistance only became public knowledge after Willard won the title from Johnson on April 5, 1915.

"I let him have it because I believe in Willard," said McCue, "and both Jess and Jones had always done the right thing by me. I am glad that Willard captured the championship. He sure deserves it."

But after the Mandot fight, because of Jones' attention to larger matters, McCue's own career went into a stall. He was out of the ring until July 4, 1914. And even then it was supposed to be Wolgast fighting Mexican Joe Rivers in the third installment of the bitter rivalry that went back two years to their lightweight title match in which Wolgast and Rivers hit the deck simultaneously in the 13th round, and referee Jack Welch helped up Wolgast and counted Rivers out. But three days before the much-anticipated third match with Rivers, Wolgast broke his arm sparring and had to be scratched. Jones penciled in McCue, who had made the trip to Los Angeles with them.

"I can make McCue whip Rivers, and I'll do it," said Wolgast, "I've boxed Joe until I know his methods by heart. This McCue is a corker."

His layoff notwithstanding, McCue himself figured that if nothing else a difference in lifestyles gave him the edge.

"I don't know the taste of tobacco or liquor, and I go to bed at nine o'clock," McCue said. "And these are the things that count in a boxer's life."

It was well-known, on the other hand, that Rivers and the bottle were more than passing acquaintances. But when in shape, Mexican Joe—who was actually born in Los Angeles, and staunchly insisted that he was "as American as George M. Cohan"—was one of the toughest fighters of the time, and he outweighed McCue by 13½ pounds when they stepped into the ring.

"Seldom has a scrapper undertaken a task so large as the one McCue has entered into with child-like confidence in his ability to surmount all obstacles and overcome all handicaps to win a glorious victory," wrote reporter Jay Davidson.

It only went two rounds. McCue was down at the end of the first, and when Rivers floored him again in the next round, Jones insisted that the fight be stopped.

"He was not really knocked out by Rivers, but when he went to the floor two times in succession, I thought he was outclassed and threw up the sponge," Jones explained. "The boy has been crying about what I did ever since. The next time he starts, he may surprise us. I am going to keep a string on him, even while I am away in Europe."

It was a long and very loose string. As Ed W. Smith reported after Willard won the title, "McCue went back to Racine and waited for Jones to come. He is still waiting. It will be a long wait. With another champion tucked under his wing, Jones doesn't feel like bothering with mere prospects at the present time. So McCue will have to plow along the best he can."

He did, but it wasn't the same after Rivers. Eventually, he went back to John McCue, and while he always professed nothing but gratitude to Jones and said he understood Cherokee Tom's devotion to Willard, it must have given McCue a secret thrill when, with Jones in the other corner, he whipped the maker of champions' latest hope, Sailor Friedman, in November 1917, in still another no-decision.

While his stint with Jones didn't make a champion of him, the experience taught McCue something that stood him in even better stead. Wolgast fought on until they carted him off to the booby hatch for the rest of his life, and even after he went down in flames to Jack Dempsey in 1919, Willard had several fights when he was past 40. But in 1918, the idol of Racine called it quits at age 23, and lived a happy, prosperous life until his death on April 8, 1971.

"I thought it better to quit when I was young instead of hanging on to be battered," said McCue, 23-3-2 (22) with 57 no-decisions. "I had seen enough of Wolgast when I was with him under Jones' management." ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and Bill Schutte is a boxing historian based in Whitewater, Wisconsin.

WHO IS ROY JONES?

A Revealing Look At Boxing's Pound-For-Pound Best

By Nigel Collins

Old-timers will tell you that too much religion isn't generally a good thing for a man who makes his living beating up other men. But these days, Roy Jones is starting to sound more like a preacher than a prize fighter. It's not that the undisputed light heavyweight champion has suddenly seen the light or anything like that. Heck, he's been going to church ever since his grandmother began taking him when he was a little boy—and so far it's never stopped him from punching anybody in the head. Somehow, the tough love he got in the gym from his father and the compassionate love he found at his grandmother's church combined to help create not only the best fighter in the world, but one of the most confounding personalities the game has ever known.

Maybe we've been too busy trying to mold Jones into what we wanted him to be to see the obvious: that there is nobody else quite like him in boxing. In his unconventional way, Jones has made a unique mark. From deciding on how best to dole out his prodigious talent to his hip-hop ringwalks, he's defined himself in his own terms. And if he's alienated a certain segment of the traditional boxing audience, he's also struck a cord with young African-American fans at a time when there haven't been too many high-profile boxing heroes appealing to their particular

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Jones loves having all three light heavyweight championship belts, and says he'll try his best to keep the title unified. But don't expect him to spread himself too thin in order to placate the alphabet organizations. Jones knows he's bigger than all of them put together.

Photo by Tom Casino

demographic. Forget George Foreman. Even guys like Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson are old-timers as far as today's 20-somethings are concerned. Jones is very much now, a Generation-X boxer who refuses to conform to anybody's stereotype.

Lately, he's just as likely to share the spiritual side of himself as his analysis of the 175-pound division. But don't get the wrong idea. Jones still has a steely edge about him, still frowns a lot more than he smiles. But, overall, he seems a smidgen happier, slightly less at odds with the rest of the world than in the past.

"You know what it is? Now, don't nobody treat me the wrong way," said Jones, speaking with a much thicker Northwestern Florida accent than when he's serving as color commentator on *Boxing After Dark*. "Now, I do my own thing. I got people who try to do things the way I want 'em done. I've been enjoying my career the last year-and-a-half."

Jones has always been very sensitive about being treated the "wrong way," and understandably so. So many fighters have been screwed, only a fool wouldn't be wary. But in the process of protecting himself, Jones has turned some people off, ruffled feathers in both corporate and media circles. He's certainly nobody's man but his own, and on occasion he's even evoked the ire of HBO, the Time Warner company that pays most of his bills. And on top of all that, he seldom fights the way most mainstream boxing fans want him to—all out, all the time. Still, he's reached the pinnacle of his profession by doing things his way. You have to respect that.

Jones has been accused of being cranky, arrogant, aloof, and difficult to get along with. And in his time, he's been all of that and more. But more than anything else, he's been the most talented fighter of his era. There was never too much debate about that, but whether or not he was the

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Jones displeased a lot of fans by not going for the knockout in his title unification bout with then-IBF champ Reggie Johnson, settling instead for a shutout decision win. But it's clear that we'll have to accept Jones for what he is, not what we want him to be.

Jones says that IBF mandatory challenger Antonio Tarver, undefeated European Dariusz Michalczewski, and WBA "interim" champ Richard Hall all have a place in his future. But moving up to the heavyweight division remains little more than a maybe.

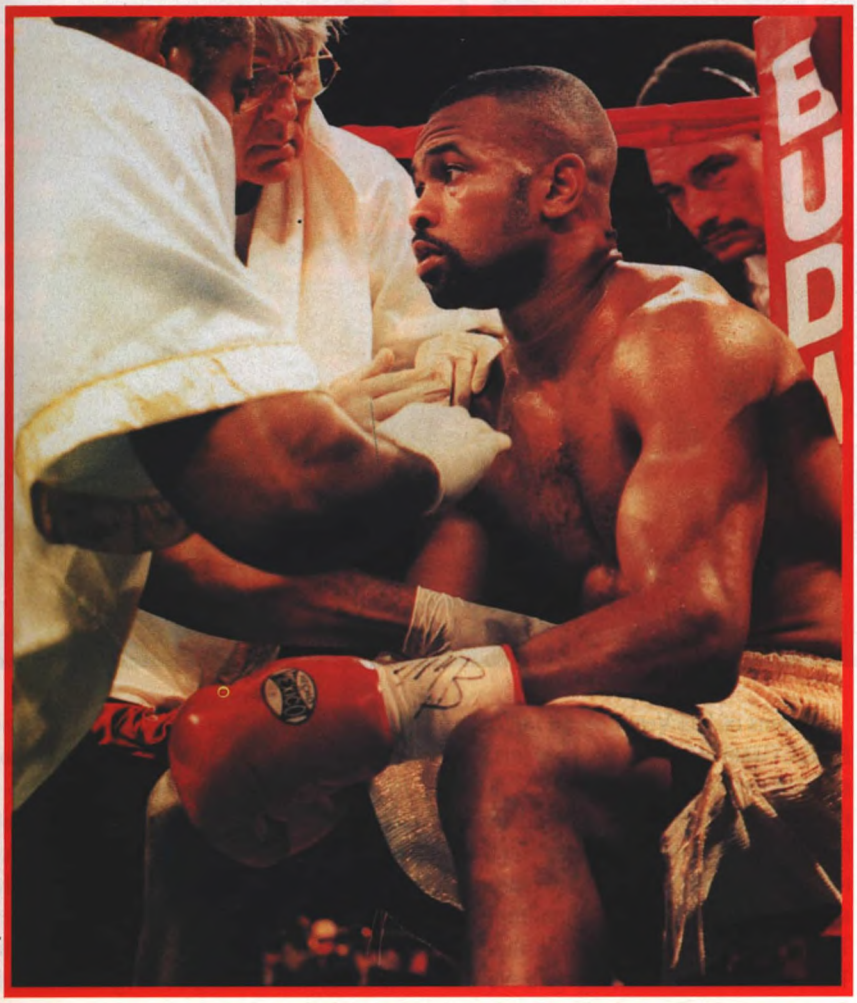


Photo by Tom Casino

Jones looks more pensive than pitiless between rounds. But despite his complex personality, his claim to boxing's pound-for-pound title is stronger than ever.

best fighter, pound-for-pound, was another matter all together. Even in the bout that made him the unified light heavyweight champion, Jones held back once he had the fight well in hand, and allowed outclassed Reggie Johnson to last the distance. The fact that that's not what the majority of boxing enthusiasts want to see doesn't bother Jones one iota.

The big question about Jones used to be whether or not he'd ever fight up to the full extent of his seemingly unlimited potential. But as he continues to dominate opponents without really exerting himself, that has become a moot point. The question now is whether or not he's so damned good that it really doesn't matter if he gives us everything he's got. Even putting out, say, 85 percent, he's better than anybody else around right now. And after both Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad disqualified themselves by turning "The Fight Of The Millennium" into a polite sparring match, there was no doubt that Jones, 40-1 (33), deserved the mythical pound-for-pound title.

In early-October, THE RING met with Jones in New York to present him his second pound-for-pound belt. He had reigned previously from the April 1996 issue until August '97, when De La Hoya took over the top spot. Thankfully, Jones was gra-

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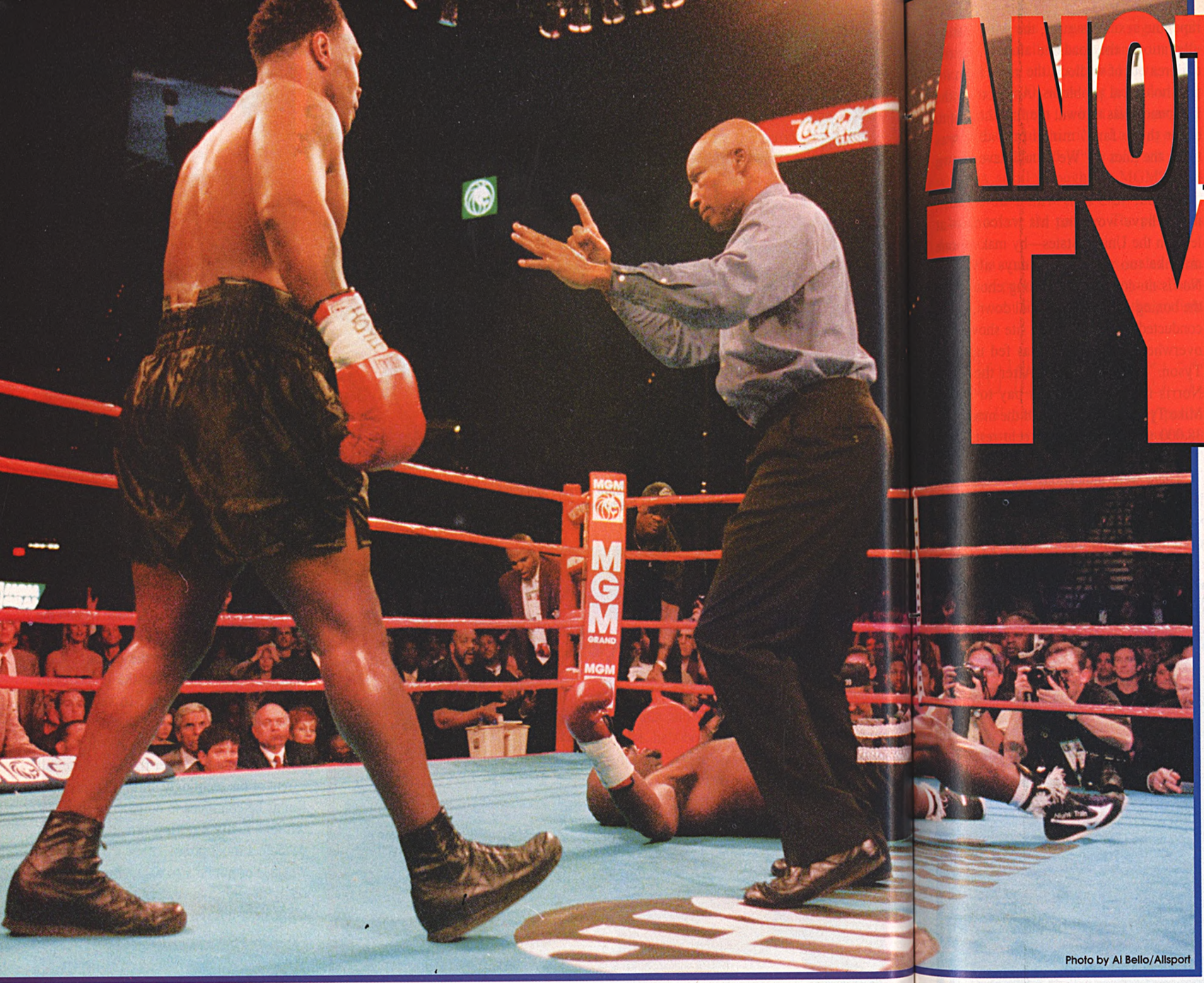


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

ANOTHER TYSON DEBACLE

Maybe It's Time To Share Him With The Rest Of The World

Not again! Referee Richard Steele has another mess on his hands after Tyson drops Orlin Norris with a left hook shortly after the bell rang to end the first round. It was the latest debacle in a series of controversial incidents that have marred Tyson's career.

By Tim Graham

The bell sounded to start the second round, and that's when it hit the crowd. All 12,081 of them saw that Orlin Norris wasn't getting off his stool. Referee Richard Steele ordered Mike Tyson to a neutral corner where the fighter shadowboxed to stay loose. But it soon became apparent there would be no more fighting.

Dozens of Las Vegas Metro Police and MGM Grand Garden security officers stormed the ring apron to secure it. It was the third time in as many Tyson fights they had done so before the bout was supposed to be over. And, as the fans began their anticipatory jeering, another familiar Tyson scene was playing out in the ring. The referee was conferring with Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director Marc Ratner. Steele had deducted two points from Tyson for clearly hitting Norris on the break and after the bell. As a result of the late left hook, Norris crumpled to the canvas. He hurt his knee on the way down, and ringside physician Flip Homansky determined that he couldn't continue.

Then came the clincher. Ratner passed the final word along to ring announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr., who informed the gathering that the fight was ruled a no-contest because of an injury resulting from an accidental foul.

The obligatory chants of "Bulls___! Bulls___!" kicked up, but the ruckus was halfhearted. Sure, there were a select few who blasted Norris as he left the ring (the crowd couldn't have known at the time Norris' injury was legitimate; an MRI later showed he had dislocated his kneecap) and questions of his manhood were plainly audible. For the most part, however, the fans, some of whom paid as much as $1,000 for a ringside ticket, left the arena in an orderly fashion. Sure, there was much headshaking and disgust, but it was almost as if they were so tired of being cheated by a Tyson fight, they couldn't even muster up the energy to emphatically complain.

Maybe they were too ashamed of themselves. Maybe they were too embarrassed for not knowing any better. Maybe they had finally had enough. One more Mike Tyson fight, one more Mike Tyson fiasco.

The fans came back after Tyson twice bit Evander Holyfield's ears, earning himself an indefinite suspension and a $3-million fine from the NSAC. The fans came back again after he was outboxed by Frans Botha for four rounds and then snuffed "The White Buffalo" with a devastating, one-punch knockout. They came back even after Tyson admitted that, at the end

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

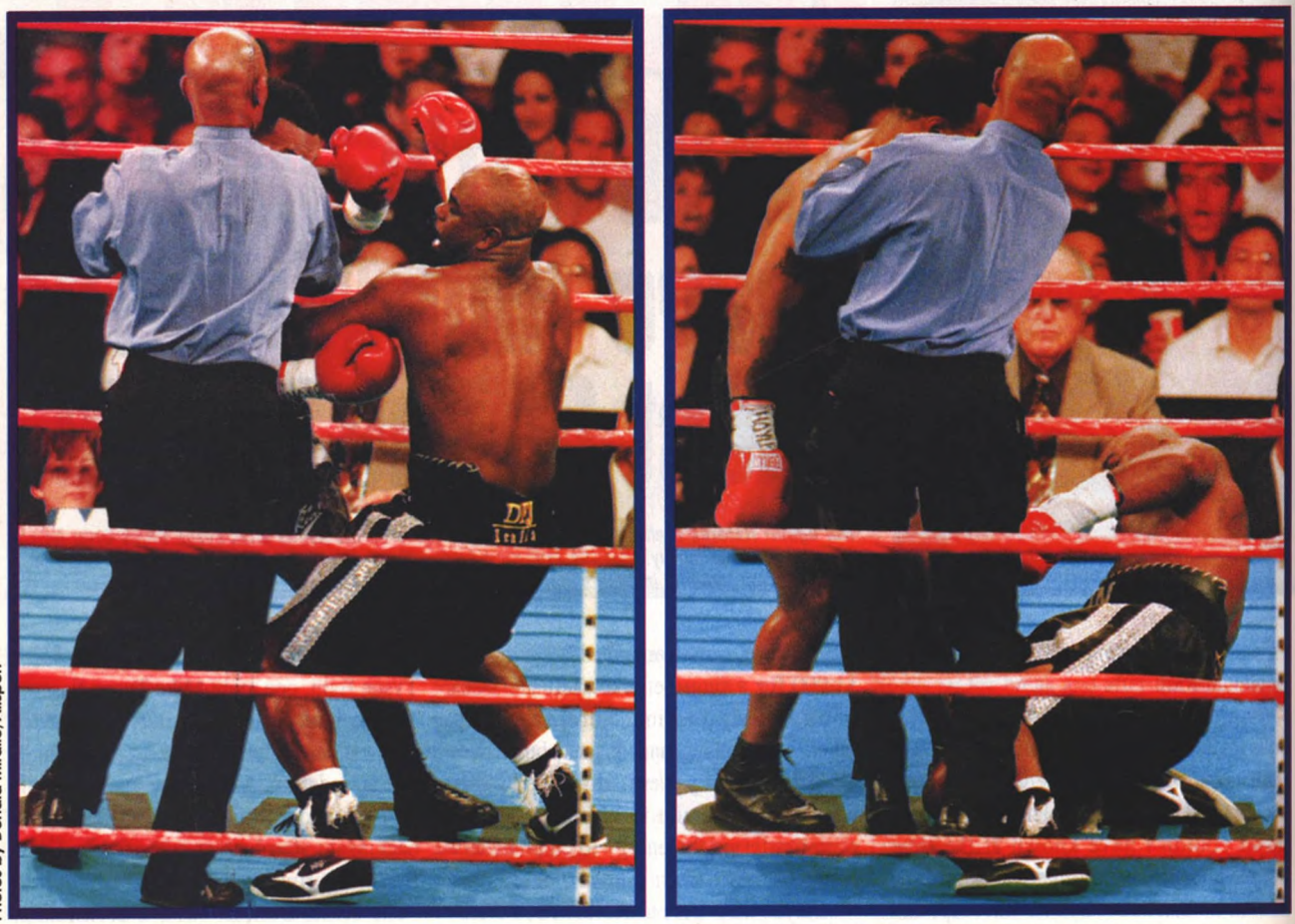
Although he didn't land any significant punches, Tyson looked half-decent during the three minutes of action. Unfortunately, the bout didn't last long enough to answer many questions.

of the first round of that fight, he tried to break Botha's arm during a clinch. They attended the Norris fight knowing that Tyson, one week earlier, told the *Los Angeles Times* he would bite again if provoked.

The fans also were fully aware of the myriad outside-the-ring problems—the rape, the sexual assaults, the wife-beating allegations, the roadside altercation, the children out of wedlock, the medication for psychological problems. As soon as the late punch was thrown, the first thought to enter those fans' minds probably was along the lines of "We should have known better."

Tyson, 46-3 (40) with 1 no-contest, might have worn out his welcome—at least in the United States—by making one mistake too many. Four days after the Norris no-contest, plenty long enough for the boxing community to cool down, a poll conducted by ESPN's Web site showed an overwhelming majority was fed up with Tyson. The poll asked, "After the Orlin Norris fiasco, would you pay to watch Mike Tyson fight again?" Of the more than 38,000 votes cast, 75.1 percent responded "No."

There were indications even before the Norris fight, however, that Tyson's allure was swiftly waning. The October 23 matchup wasn't deemed pay-per-view



Photos by Donald Miralle/Allsport

Tyson clips Norris with a short hook as Steele tries to separate the two fighters at the conclusion of the first round (left). A split second later, Norris crumpled to the canvas, injuring his right knee as he fell (right). When Norris couldn't answer the bell for the second round, the fight was ruled a no-contest.

worthy and was relegated to regular, ol' Showtime. A sellout was virtually impossible, and many of the occupied seats, which started at $100, were not paid for. The days leading up to the bout didn't produce any of the usual electricity Las Vegas had grown accustomed to for a Tyson fight week. A stroll through the MGM hotel-casino on the eve of fight night found nary a buzz among the patrons. The place was dead.

Media coverage also was scaled back. Instead of packing everyone into the hotel-casino's vast EFX Theater for the prefight press conference, a smattering showed up at the much cozier Hollywood Theater. No outdoor media tent was necessary, as had been the case for Tyson's six previous MGM fights.

Tyson fight nights also used to produce as many A-list celebrities as the Academy Awards. But as the cameras panned the MGM audience that night, the best they could glimpse were Wayne Newton and Vern Troyer, the tiny actor who played Mini Me in the *Austin Powers* movie sequel.

Tyson-Norris was not a major event. It was just another fight. And Tyson's appeal has petered out considerably more since that frustrating night.

The wind outside is blowing cold, and Tyson is sleeping on a short-sheeted bed. In other words, his window is closing in a hurry. So where does that leave the man who used to be the main attraction in all of sports?

Outside the country, most likely. Tyson's best chance of taking advantage of the little star power he has remaining is by fighting abroad. Tyson hasn't done so since 1990, when he suffered his historic

NOW, THIS IS THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE DONE

Las Vegas, Nevada: The only positive aspect of the Tyson-Norris card was the chief supporting bout, which, despite the relative anonymity of the participants, was everything a prize fight is supposed to be—an exciting display of skill and courage, highlighted by a dynamic change of fortune and an explosive climax.

IBF junior lightweight champion Roberto Garcia, wearing the name of his Web site on the seat of his trunks, was in control through the first four rounds of his bout with Diego Corrales. But the IBF's top-ranked contender stormed back by scoring a pair of knockdowns in the sixth round, and finished off Garcia with a devastating overhand right 48 seconds into the seventh.

Based on the early action, Garcia, 32-1 (24), didn't seem to be in much jeopardy of losing in his third title defense, as he marked his upstart opponent's face almost instantaneously with sharp left hooks. Corrales, who suffered a cut under his right eye while training for the fight, quickly had the wound reopened. His right eye became progressively worse as Garcia continued to connect, and appeared to be in danger of shutting altogether.

But blood started pouring from a cut over Garcia's right eye in the fifth round. The cut, which obviously bothered Garcia, was caused by an accidental headbutt and gave Corrales, 22, a target.

With WBC 130-pound champ Floyd Mayweather scouting from ringside, Corrales, 29-0 (24), rallied with several three-punch flurries in the sixth round, flooring Garcia for the first time with a short left followed by a right. Garcia got up on wobbly legs, and another Corrales onslaught forced him to take a knee with 15 seconds remaining. He got up again, and the bell sounded to temporarily save the shaky Garcia from further punishment.

In between rounds, referee Joe Cortez (USA) warned Garcia, "If you don't throw punches, I'm going to stop the fight." Garcia almost didn't have time to throw a punch as Corrales swarmed him. With his back to the ropes, Garcia absorbed the final blow that knocked him right on his robertogarcia.com. Cortez didn't even bother to count, and promptly waved the fight over.

"After I knocked him down [the first time], I knew it was a matter of time," Corrales said. "After the second knockdown, I wasn't sure what the referee was going to do. All I knew was when he went down for the second time, a ton of pressure left my body. I was so tense in the first few rounds. I was nervous. But this is the greatest feeling in the world."

Garcia, 129, Oxnard, California, was in command on the judges' scorecards prior to the sixth round. Steve Weisfeld (USA) gave the first four rounds to Garcia, while Bill Graham (USA) and Mike Glienna (USA) each gave him three of the first four. All three gave Corrales, 129½, Sacramento, California, the fifth.

"I let him get in, and he counterpunched well," said the 24-year-old Garcia, who made $200,000 to Corrales' $40,000. "That's how he beat me. Corrales deserves it. He did a great job. He caught me and surprised me. Corrales is a strong fighter."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: America Presents

(10-23-99)

—TG

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Corrales rips into Garcia en route to title

first loss, to Buster Douglas in Tokyo.

"I want Mike to experience different surroundings," Tyson's adviser, Shelly Finkel, was quoted as saying after the Norris fight. It's obvious that Finkel, the astute business man that he is, knows the three most important factors in marketing—even if your product is a nefarious boxer—are location, location, and location.

At a commission hearing six days after the fight, it was determined that no fine or suspension would be levied against Tyson for his actions in the Norris fight. But it sure sounds like Lorenzo Fertitta of the Nevada commission seconded the opinion that Tyson has worn out his welcome in Nevada.

"Our advice to you," Fertitta told Tyson's promoter Dan Goossen and attorney Jim Jimmerson, "is to have Mike Tyson pack up his bags and take his act on the road. I'm not so sure we need him in the state of Nevada."

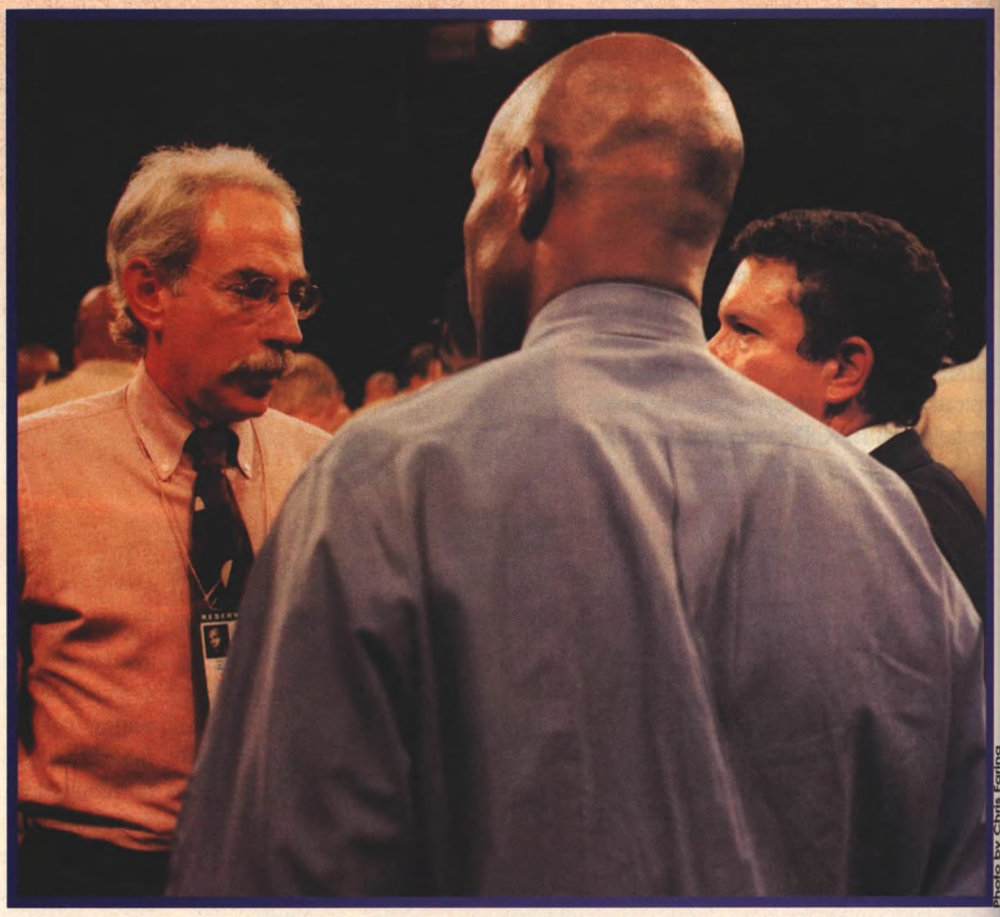


Photo by Chris Farina

Boxing commissioner Marc Ratner talks things over with Steele and ringside physician Flip Homansky. Steele said that Tyson's foul was accidental, and Dr. Homansky said that Norris was in no condition to continue.

Tyson has fought outside of Las Vegas only twice since the loss to Douglas: a first-round TKO of Alex Stewart nine years ago in Atlantic City, and a third-round kayo of Buster Mathis in Philadelphia, four years ago. Fighting abroad would behoove a Tyson comeback, if one were meant to be. There would be less pressure and less media scrutiny. He also would be able to get away with fighting a lesser caliber of boxer. International fans would be enamored by Tyson's mere presence and be much more lenient in judging his choice of competition. That would allow him to get much-needed work—he has fought only nine rounds in three years and has won just one of his last four fights—and maybe put together a string of impressive outings.

Tyson's only two international fights have been in Japan, where he remains huge. So the Land of the Rising Sun would be a viable location for a possible Tyson resurrection. Other options include Denmark, where he could beat up on someone like the not-so-great Dane, Brian Nielsen, or England, where he could steamroll Herbie Hide.

Showtime and promoter America Presents desperately need their investment to make a major turnaround. The planned February 26 bout against Shannon Briggs at Madison Square Garden (a potentially solid gate because Tyson hasn't fought in New York City since 1986) still appears to be on, and Dan Goossen's group is likely to put Tyson back in the ring in December. Briggs probably would appear on that undercard, with both facing safe opponents.

Even though HBO is no longer associated with Tyson, the network played a major role in his emergence as a global icon, broadcasting 16 of his fights from 1986-'90. And HBO's Lou DiBella is disgusted with Tyson's decline.

"It's like watching self-destruction in a fish bowl, and it's not even interesting anymore," DiBella told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* after the Norris fight. "He's not about boxing; he's a celebrity. The press that was there wasn't there to cover a prize fight, but to see if there would be a train wreck—and they got a derailment."

Tyson is somewhat like boxing's version of pitcher Mark Wohlers. The former Atlanta Braves closer extraordinaire used to punch out batters with his crackling fastball. Now he can't find the catcher's mitt and finds himself on a psychiatrist's couch as often as a pitcher's mound.

Tyson also needs to locate some control. There are many, DiBella included, who doubt he can. But if Tyson eventually does get it together, he conceivably could regain his status as boxing's box office behemoth rather than appealing only to the markets that watch Jerry Springer and buy *Faces Of Death* videos.

The heavyweight division is in a sad state right now. But a Tyson rebound makes the division far more legitimate. A month before his rematch with Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis stated he wanted to fight Tyson. Holyfield would like a third

(Continued on page 63)

THE TOP 10 FIGHTS OF THE 1990s

Not A Butterbean Or Mia St. John Fight Among Them!

By Ted Bodenrader

It was the turn of the century. The wagons rolled up to the outdoor arenas, unloading the eager fans by the bushel. The look of anticipation colored their faces, for they were always sure it would be something special. They just knew they'd get their money's worth.

After all, back 100 years ago, when the bare-knuckle era was still fresh in everyone's mind, you knew exactly what you were in store for. The pugilists of the time engaged in the kind of no-frills slugfests that defined the sport of boxing in its purest, most primitive form. Twenty rounds, 30 rounds, there could never be enough.

Well, it is 100 years later now, and we're not only creeping up on the next turn of the century, we're venturing head-first into the new millennium. They would have never guessed back then, 10 decades ago, what the sport has evolved into.

The 1990s saw boxing turn into a Ringling Brothers production. It was a 10-year running circus, where clowns shamelessly quit, bit, and then spit. We saw decisions far worse than anything Richard Nixon ever came up with.

But once in a great while, on that rare, special night, boxing gleamed like the North Star. These were the rare nights when the ring festivities had nothing to do with shiny plastic belts or alphabet-soup titles. It had nothing to do with multimillion-dollar contracts or future HBO appearances.

To these noble combatants, it was all about raw pride. It was about being the best. Two men would bravely climb those three steps to engage in the ultimate test of will, courage, and determination. Yet, only one would descend them a short time later, the better man.

It is these fights that always shine through when all the mindless hoopla and endless controversy have tried so diligently to destroy the game. They remind us that boxing, in its primitive, barbaric form, 100 years later, remains the ultimate competition. Words like courage, heart, and determination are so freely tossed around in the sporting world, but they don't quite mean the same on a court or on a gridiron. Not the way they do in boxing.

Old names like Johnson, Tunney, and Dempsey originally defined these words. Modern ones like Holyfield, Gatti, and Chavez kept them fresh in our vocabulary. These are the men who put everything they had on the line to prove something that they almost seemed willing to die for.

The money is on the table. The promoters have sunk in their claws. But, as we've seen through some of the pulse-pounding brawls of the past decade, 100 years later, the warrior spirit has lived, exemplified in THE RING's bouts selection (chronologically listed) as the top 10 fights of the '90s.

BUSTER DOUGLAS KO 10 MIKE TYSON

February 11, 1990

They sat in utter silence, their hands folded on their laps, their unknowing eyes fixed straight ahead. This was no ordinary fight crowd. The rows and rows of blank faces looked a lot more like a quiet church gathering or a movie house full of hushed viewers. And in a sense, the 20,000 Japanese fans did turn out to view a violent monster movie of sorts, an American tale of a nasty one-man wrecking crew. The only problem was, as HBO analyst Larry Merchant would so fittingly put it, "Godzilla turned out to be the other guy."

But February 11, 1990, was not really about the birth of boxing's newest man-eating creature or the unveiling of the new heavyweight king. On this night, a quiet young no-name from Columbus, Ohio, would personify things like courage, determination, diligence, and will.

Once again, the world had been bracing for another vibrant quake, courtesy of the infamous world-beater from New York. What the world didn't know was that the nameless, faceless challenger from Ohio was the man with the mission and the plan. And nothing, not even the insurmountable 42-1 odds, not even the indestructible fighting specimen known as Mike Tyson, was going to stand in the way. For one night, this real-life Rocky Balboa surpassed the accomplishments of the fictional character.

During those 40 minutes of perhaps the greatest heavyweight performance since the Ali Era, James "Buster" Douglas, inside the eerily subdued Tokyo Dome, ignited the loudest *bang* to rattle the sporting world's ears all decade long. Many of us who witnessed what transpired that night, halfway around the globe, were booking appointments at Pearl the next day because we were so sure our eyes were deceiving us.

Photo by Mikio Nakai

Douglas uppercuts Tyson on his way to a monumental upset

The jab shot out like a pistol. The right hand fired like a cannon. The combinations, the graceful footwork, it all blended together to paint a magnificent picture. They say all great fights consist of not one, but two dynamic performances. But this one was different.

Buster Douglas was destroying Mike Tyson.

Initially, the challenger was supposed to resume a horizontal posture along the canvas, just like the 37 scrubs before him. Except Douglas did not know his place in this production. At least not until the closing moments of the eighth round, when a thunderous uppercut from Tyson finally blasted Douglas to the mat and jarred the rest of us back to a cruel reality.

Douglas, at that moment, was faced with two choices. He could call it a night, take a hot shower, and be blanketed with praise for his game efforts. Or for one night, he could pull off the unthinkable. He could become a champion.

It was at this very instant that Douglas defined a truly great, historical evening. Not only did he arise from the floor to resume battle with his hovering antagonist, he would ultimately slay him with a vicious onslaught two rounds later, a crippling uppercut followed by a four-punch flurry that put the Tyson mystique to sleep.

Douglas would never reach these heights again. And the image of the disoriented Tyson—counted out as he desperately crammed his mouthpiece in sideways—was certainly an unforgettable one, for it would mark the beginning of troubled times for both the struggling sport and its greatest star.

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ KO 12 MELDRICK TAYLOR

March 17, 1990

St. Patrick's Day. A day of mindless mayhem. A day of overindulgence. A day for getting "bombed."

And on St. Paddy's Day in 1990, the world's premier junior welterweights were getting bombed all right, bombed with potent shots of leather that left the bloodthirsty Las Vegas Hilton crowd in a raucous frenzy and the two featured practitioners beyond just a little bit tipsy.

To see Julio Cesar Chavez and Meldrick Taylor stagger around the ring on wobbly legs, it would have seemed that they were, indeed, just a little bit punch-drunk. In other words, if powerpunches were the same as 'Bama Slammers, Chavez and Taylor would have been downright sloshed.

As it turned out, Chavez-Taylor I gave us plenty to feel buzzed about. This meeting of unbeatens to determine, pound-for-pound, the best fighter alive, was a rare indulgence for fight fans in that it served up everything we were expecting—and more. An American Olympic hero. A rabid Mexican pit bull. When the two components were unleashed in the same ring together, they blended like gin and vermouth to provide a most intoxicating mix.

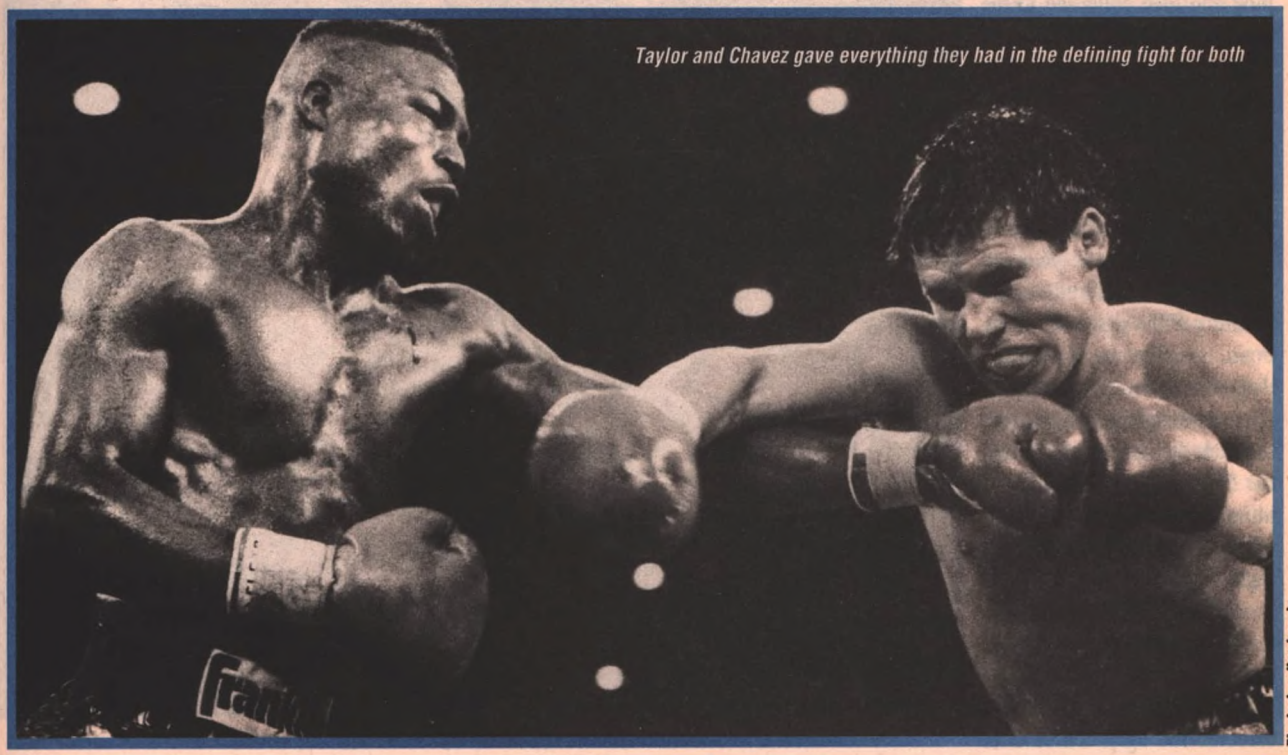
In the early rounds, it was Taylor's speedy infighting that proved the more potent kick, as he built up a commanding lead over Chavez. Yet, the Mexican champion raged back, heroically dropping Taylor in the closing moments of the fight. To many, it seemed almost like too little, too late.

But wait a second. No, wait two seconds.

If Richard Steele had done just that—and not stepped in to call a dramatic cease-fire in favor of Chavez—Taylor would have been basking in a glorious victory bash, even if it was celebrated in a hospital room. Just two clicks of a stopwatch were all that separated a dazzling decision victory from a grueling defeat.

Yet, at the time of the stoppage, the world's most controversial referee wasn't looking at a time clock. Instead, he was studying a man both battered and beaten, a man who was bleeding so badly from his mouth, he'd actually swallowed two pints of blood before the night was through, a man who had had the orbital bone by his puffy left eye fractured, a man who was bleeding profusely from the kidneys, a man who was suffering the ghastly effects of severe dehydration, a man who seemed more willing to die before he'd submit his heart and his manhood to the macho Mexican superstar.

Upon stopping the bout, Steele had transformed St. Paddy's Day from an Irish celebration to a Mexican fiesta, as the pro-Chavez gathering blew the lid off the Hilton ballroom. As for the valiant Taylor, who would never be the same again, the horrific hangover would never quite go away.



Taylor and Chavez gave everything they had in the defining fight for both

Photo by Jim Laurie

ROBERT QUIROGA W 12 AKEEM ANIFOWOSHE

June 15, 1991

The ring announcer belted out the judges' decision: 115-114, 116-112, 116-112. "For the winner by unanimous decision ... and *still* the IBF junior bantamweight champion of the wooooooorld ..."

Robert Quiroga must have found it exhausting just to lift his sore left arm, even if it was in triumph, when he was announced the victor of this grueling battle, especially after the number of crushing hooks he'd thrown with it to insure he'd hang on to his hardware.

A few feet away, the defeat began to set in. "Kid Akeem" Anifowoshe had even said before the fight that he'd retire if he were to somehow lose to Quiroga, and that's exactly how he fought—as if his career depended on it. It turned out, as Akeem congratulated the reigning champion and then collapsed to the canvas in a pool of blood he had just vomited, that a lot more was riding on this than just his career.

Many doctors considered it a miracle that Kid Akeem was still breathing an hour from then, because the 22-year-old Nigerian had suffered severe swelling of the right side of his brain, compliments of a double date with Quiroga's stone-like fists. Although he was unable to notch the upset victory over the 5'3" Quiroga, Kid Akeem ultimately defied much greater odds by surviving through the night.

Although Akeem was able to recover from his brush with death a winner, his 12-round scrap with Quiroga, which resurrected the ugly debate over the use of six-ounce gloves, was not forgotten for its fistic excellence. Quiroga-Anifowoshe was a reckless head-on collision, a pair of 115-pound machines that were unwilling to alter their routes toward their respective destinations.

Quiroga sprung to life early, pounding away with scoring shots to the taller challenger's head and midsection, until Kid Akeem began finding the range in round three. Akeem repeatedly cracked Quiroga with crosses and hooks, even opening a gash above the champion's left eye. Quiroga, however, never backed up an inch, but rather kept coming, kept coming, kept coming all night long to administer some punishment of his own.

The two-way beating was so severe that, when it was finally over, Quiroga's eyes were swollen shut, while Akeem merely nursed a puffy eye. But as is so common in boxing, the looks can easily deceive. Quiroga, whose disfigured face looked more like that of the loser, exited the ring with the championship belt fastened firmly around his waist. Anifowoshe, who hardly sported a scratch, left the ring on a stretcher bound for a San Antonio hospital, where he'd bravely engage in the fight of his life.

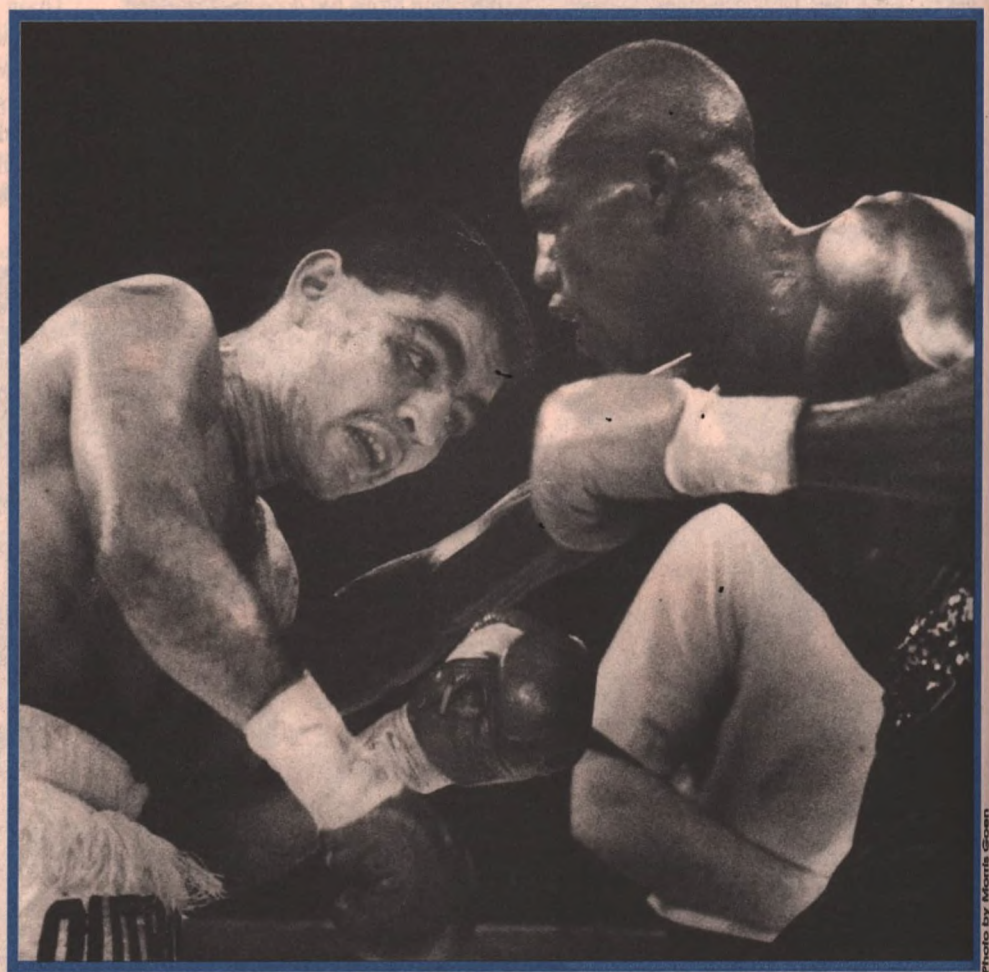


Photo by Mario Goen

Kid Akeem folds champion Quiroga with a right to the body

RIDDICK BOWE W 12 EVANDER HOLYFIELD

November 13, 1992

It was 12,000 miles and a dozen time zones away. The memory was supposed to be over four years in his past.

Riddick Bowe was actually a lot closer to home on this electric night in Las Vegas, yet somehow the 25-year-old heavyweight banger was still stuck back in Seoul, South Korea. The merciless boxing press would not let him forget his disappointing stint in the 1988 Olympics, when he was labeled a "dog" and a "quitter" for letting down his country by only winning a not-so-shiny silver medal.

November 13, 1992, was the night of Bowe's reunion with the moment of truth, a night for redemption, a night he was to look into the confident eyes of his polar opposite and try to take everything he had. But to take Evander Holyfield's three championship belts, you had to be willing to not only take his best punches, but also to take his gargantuan heart.

As Bowe prepared to engage in the greatest sand combat since "Lawrence Of Arabia" took Damascus, he glanced down through the ropes to the figure responsible for painting him yellow. Lennox Lewis, the same man who whacked out Bowe in two rounds to capture Olympic gold, was grinning at him from underneath a TV commentator's headset.

Bowe was suddenly reunited with his former self, the one who had disgusted Olympic roommate Ray Mercer to the extent that the rival heavyweight refused to even bunk with him. But a wife and three children can seriously change a man. Yes, "Big Daddy" was going to be big trouble for Commander Vander. Hence, Holyfield-Bowe I was a lot like the original *Rocky*. It was so good that it would spawn a series of sequels that could never live up to the thrills of the first one.

This was undeniably the greatest night of Bowe's career, the night he dazzled the capacity gathering with one of the most sensational performances of the decade, the night the lazy kid from Brownsville became "Da Man," the undisputed heavyweight king of the universe. It didn't matter how they fought. On the inside, on the outside, Bowe had an answer to everything Holyfield threw his way. By round 10, "The Real Deal" looked like a real mess.

Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

Bowe proves himself with a bruising win over Holyfield

It was in this round that Bowe knocked Holyfield around most destructively, as the champ struggled desperately to stay on his feet. As Bowe's onslaught finally simmered, Holyfield, never one to be short on miracles, somehow salvaged the strength to return the fire, battering Bowe throughout the final minute of the round.

It was the ultimate test of courage and will, as Holyfield would later admit that the 11th-round knockdown he suffered made him feel "like I was drowning."

What ultimately surfaced that night was worldwide recognition for two most noble combatants who fought more for glory and pride than for the three plastic belts at stake. At the center of it all gleamed the most obvious, most glowing presence of all. Holyfield saw it. Lewis saw it, too.

It was Riddick Bowe's enormous heart.

MICHAEL CARBAJAL KO 7 CHIQUITA GONZALEZ

March 13, 1993

It didn't take much effort to whisk Michael Carbajal into the Las Vegas desert air on this brisk March evening in 1993. After all, the 1988 Olympic silver medalist weighed about the equivalent of a few bags of groceries.

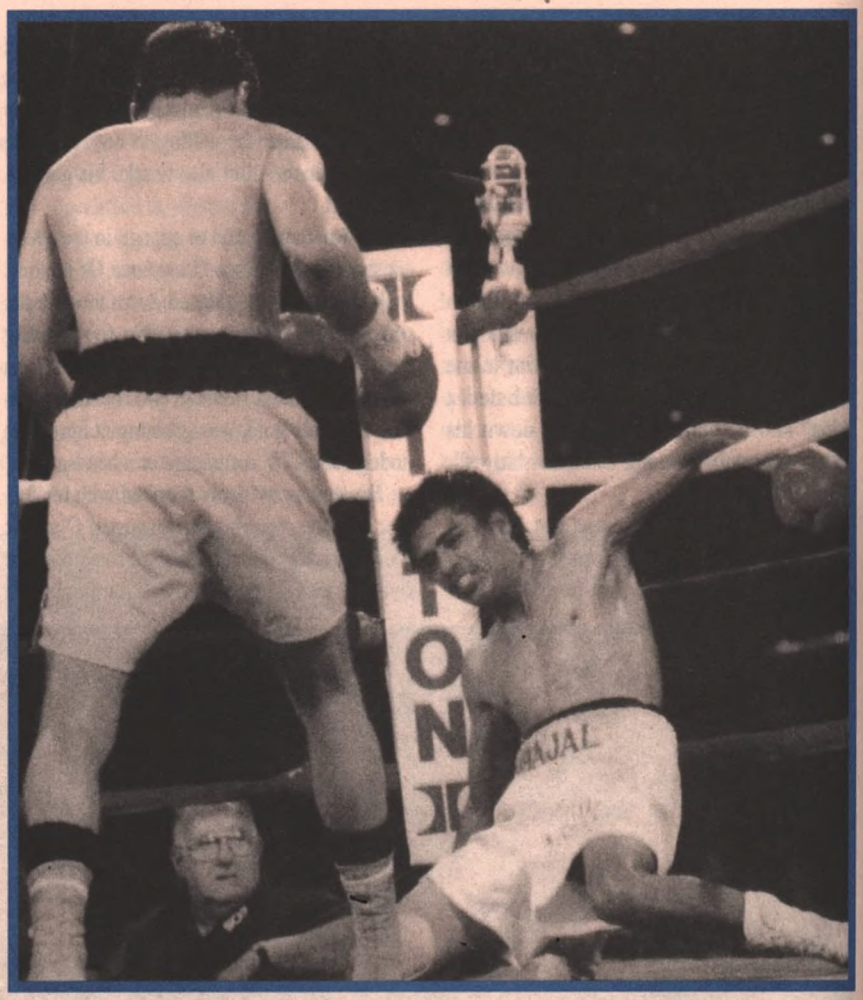
The 108-pound champion may stand a measly 5'5", but at this moment, he was enjoying a vantage point like nobody else in the joint. Carbajal was floating higher than a kite, high atop the junior flyweight division on his glorious lonesome. He was now shouting out the chants of glee that can only follow inspirational triumphs like the one he had just pulled off.

His mouth open, his arms raised in victory, what he should have been belting out was a popular Frank Sinatra tune. Michael Carbajal really did do it his way.

In coming back to score a thrilling victory in 1993's Fight of the Year, Carbajal had so stubbornly neglected two golden rules: 1) always listen to your corner, and 2) always listen to Big Brother. Of course, Danny Carbajal holds both of these titles, but his wisdom meant little to Michael once the opening bell rang. It would have been wise to box the smaller, stronger challenger, but Carbajal had already made up his mind. He was going to knock Gonzalez out, and that's all there was to it.

Danny was hounded by frustration as he watched Michael stand toe-to-toe and wing it out with the 5'1" Gonzalez. After six hellish rounds, the champion had sunk into a 58-54 hole that seemed like quicksand. Carbajal was going down and going down fast.

He had been knocked off his feet by a stinging left hand in the second round, and then again in the fifth, when he found himself in more serious peril. When a pair of left-handed wrecking balls blasted against his chin, Carbajal collapsed like a demolished building. His legs wobbly, his eyes glassy, Carbajal struggled desperately to collect his bricks, as the hungry Mexican swarmed him throughout the remainder of the round, cracking him with thudding shots.



Carbajal picked himself up from this knockdown and starched Gonzalez

But Carbajal not only gathered his marbles, he retaliated with a brutal sixth-round assault of bodyshots and headshots that flip-flopped momentum and left Gonzalez in a swirl of confusion and pain. Sensing the victory at his fingertips, Carbajal moved in to close the show in round seven, firing a combination to the head that reeled Gonzalez back into the ropes. After an ensuing flurry, Carbajal stopped momentarily and packed all of his 108 pounds into the left hook that would ultimately finish Gonzalez.

It didn't really matter that Gonzalez, counted out with a second to go in the round, would regroup to avenge the knockout with a pair of dull decision victories over Carbajal. If Sinatra was in the corner of that magical spring night, he would have understood, just as brother Danny did, just as the thousands and thousands of viewers finally did, as the champion exited the arena with his belts fastened and intact.

This one had to be done the Michael Carbajal way.

NIGEL BENN KO 10 GERALD McCLELLAN

February 25, 1995

Gerald McClellan does not remember. He does not remember the onslaught of bombs administered to him by a 31-year-old slugger one dark and tragic winter night nearly five years ago. No, he cannot tell you a thing about one of the most courageous performances the boxing world has seen in years. He cannot tell you anything about one of the most brutal slugfests to ever occur in a British boxing ring, and he certainly can't recall anything about referee Alfred Azaro waving it over amid a vicious 10th-round beating.

No, McClellan does not remember anything these days. McClellan, for all intents and purposes, is a vegetable, a former middleweight champion of the world who was living the life of big hopes and big dreams, only to have them come crashing to the canvas one night in a heap of ugly defeat.

McClellan was a young man who understood the risks of his trade, the drawbacks that come with the territory when your career entails being beaten in the head night after night. On February 25, 1995, he certainly paid the price. He paid the price for thrilling the crowd with one of the most dazzling boxing spectacles of the decade, the night he brought will and desire to a higher level, despite being carried away on a stretcher.

Not long after this, the severe swelling in his brain would tragically end the blooming career of McClellan, leaving him in a blind and crippled state he remains in today. Although he'll never be able to remember his classic battle with Benn, we will never forget it.

Benn-McClellan was a 10-round blast, packed with pure TNT from start to tragic finish. We won't forget the first-round pummeling he handed Benn, nearly taking the British challenger out clean. We won't forget the way Benn swiftly turned the tide, taking over in the next few rounds, actually backing up the stronger champion. We won't forget the way a hurt, exhausted McClellan was dangling by a thread, before staging a dramatic comeback of his own in the eighth round. We won't forget the valiant gladiators, too tired to keep their hands up to protect themselves as they beat each other mercilessly with riveting power-shots. We won't forget the nasty ninth-round clash of heads that many observers believed triggered McClellan's downfall. We won't forget the way McClellan went down in the corner in the 10th, the dead look in his eyes, the doctors hovering above him, the feeling we had in our stomachs, knowing that something had just gone terribly, terribly wrong. It is often hard to look at tragedies like this with uplifting zest, but just as he always intended, McClellan left us with a gem to remember. Even if he never will.

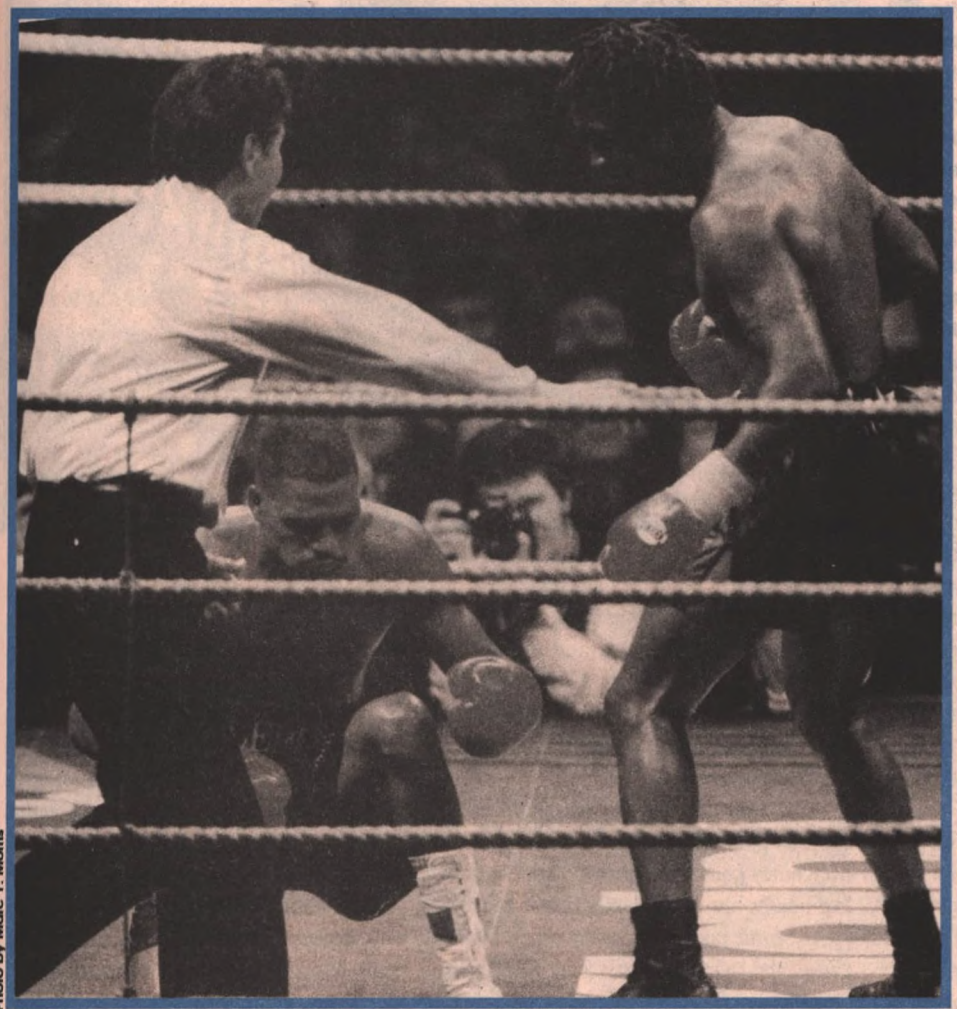


Photo by Marc Y. Morris

McClellan's demise stained an unforgettable battle with Benn

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA KO 12 KENNEDY McKINNEY

February 3, 1996

You must have been glad you put the kids to bed.

It was after dark—way after dark—in Inglewood, California, in the wee hours of February 3, 1996. Two boys, who were very bad indeed, had just come out to play.

The menacing display that these two 122-pounders were about to put on was just too graphic, way too chilling, and far too violent for anybody weak of stomach or weak of heart to handle. On this night, Kennedy McKinney and Marco Antonio Barrera would engage in the kind of ruthless hand-to-hand combat that would leave many fight fans howling for months to come, and leaving the executives at HBO network doing much the same.

McKinney and Barrera injected HBO's brand-spanking new *Boxing After Dark* series with the dynamite the network brass had been hoping for, and they did it by subjecting each other to a different variety of spanking.

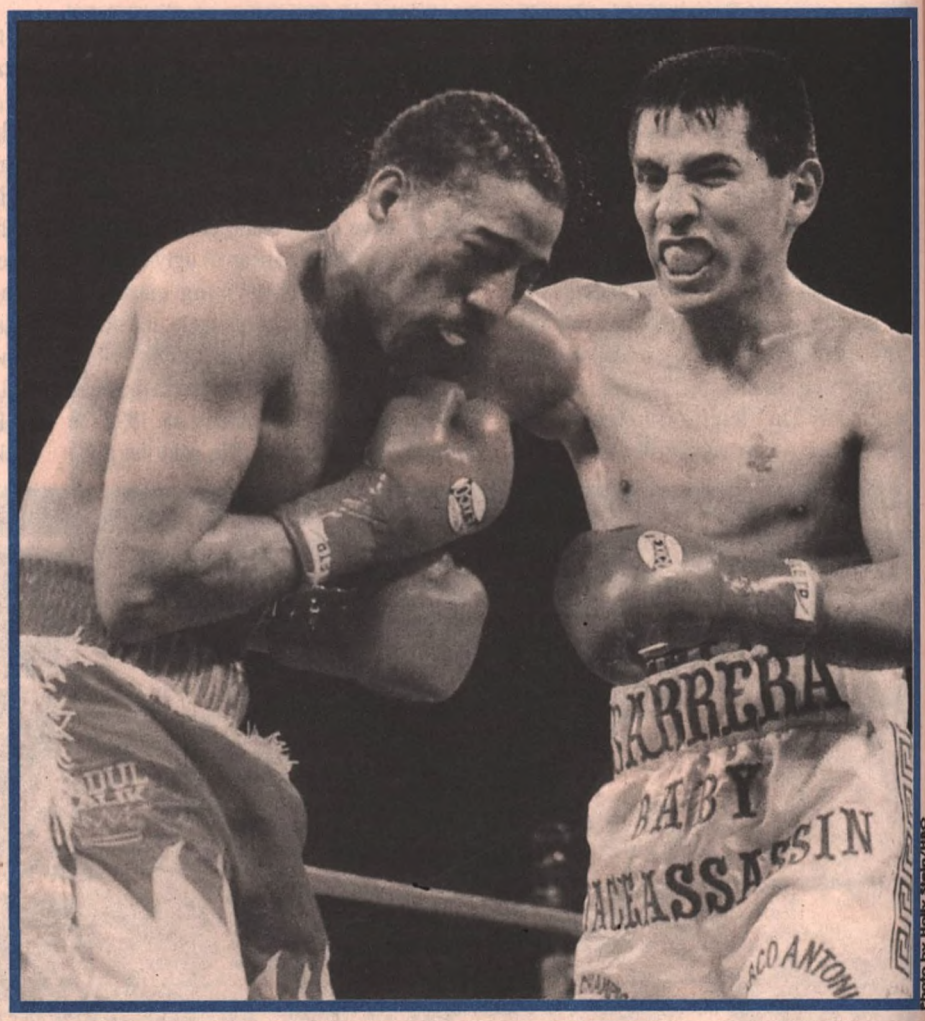
We knew it was going to be something special as early as the prefight press conference, when the two nearly engaged in their own preliminary bout. As McKinney slung some verbal mud at the undefeated Barrera, the Mexican junior featherweight responded with a bare-fisted shot to the chin. Although the offering was more of a love tap, it was obvious that there was none of the mushy stuff lost between the two rivals.

The fight eventually spilled out into the Great Western Forum, where the two poured all their emotions into one of the most thrilling wars of the decade. However, Barrera-McKinney was not so much an even-steven battle. The Mexican champion was well in command throughout the brawl, chopping McKinney with thudding body barrages and punishing head blows. But the way McKinney was swinging back—straight for the fences—it was really anybody's fight through the 12 hellish rounds.

The sixth round was perhaps the most heart-stopping three minutes of the year, as McKinney charged from his corner to wallop heavy blows at Barrera. But Barrera would come back with a vengeance by the end of the round to nearly take McKinney clean.

McKinney would taste the canvas for the third and fourth times of the evening in the eighth round and was on life support by the time the bell rang. But somehow, miraculously, the 1988 Olympic champion would recharge in time to win the 10th and 11th rounds with angry assaults, even sending Barrera down for a brief count in the 11th.

At 2:05 of the 12th round, the darkness finally hovered above McKinney's comeback hopes. It would be a pair of Barrera right hands that would ultimately lull McKinney, and a truly wonderful evening, to sleep.



Barrera drills McKinney with B.A.D. intentions

ARTURO GATTI KO 6 WILSON RODRIGUEZ

March 23, 1996

His right eye was puffy and purple. His left eye was hibernating inside of a swollen nest. And the rest of this pepperoni pizza didn't look much more appetizing. There was blood coming out of every conceivable hole in this man's head.

As for the guy underneath this ungodly mess, he was never more recognizable. Yes, it was Arturo Gatti, all right. No doubt about it.

Gatti has long been the epitome of a man who wears his occupation on his face. One look at his mug and the scar tissue that surrounds it, and there's no mistaking what his 9-to-5 days are all about. This kid's a hardened veteran of war.

If you've never been to a Gatti fight, it's a lot like bungee-jumping for the very first time—it's an indescribable, heart-stopping experience. On this spring night in '96, Gatti's antics would sweep through the rafters of Madison Square Garden and invigorate the wide-eyed crowd with a powerful jetstream of adrenaline.

To be a Gatti opponent is to truly be locked into a war you wish you had boycotted. On this night, the unlucky recruit was an obscure challenger named Wilson Rodriguez. But it took only two minutes for Rodriguez to emerge from his foxhole, as the taller, lankier brawler began opening up with jabs, hooks, and ultimately cuts upon Gatti's mug.

This same one-sided plot continued in round two, and Gatti's battered face was revealing the ugly details. Then a wicked left hook dropped the IBF junior lightweight champ for only the second time in his career.

It seemed like the window of hope was closing faster than his right eye. But it would be wrong to mistake Wilson Rodriguez for Wilson Philips. Nope, there were no fat ladies singing here. Instead, the battle was just heating up.

Gatti would climb off the stool for round three, the gleam of intent packed away somewhere beneath his puffy eyelids. But as he ripped through Rodriguez' ribs with a relentless body attack, the game challenger would simply pour it on even thicker. The momentum swung back and forth like a pendulum. Gatti, Rodriguez, Gatti, Rodriguez. There was enough action here for five *Die Hard* movies, and Gatti was playing the Bruce Willis role. Rodriguez couldn't put him away.

The climax would finally arrive in the sixth round, moments after the ringside doctor teamed up with referee Wayne Kelly to nearly pull the curtain on Gatti's marvelous comeback. Gatti was running on fumes, but he knew the scenario all too well. He had three minutes, and three minutes only, to get this one done.

It took only two for the most thrilling slugfest since Hagler-Hearns to come to a dramatic close. The left hook *ka-pow* that finished off this miraculous act, dropping Rodriguez for the duration of the night, would echo through the boxing world for the days, weeks, and months to come.

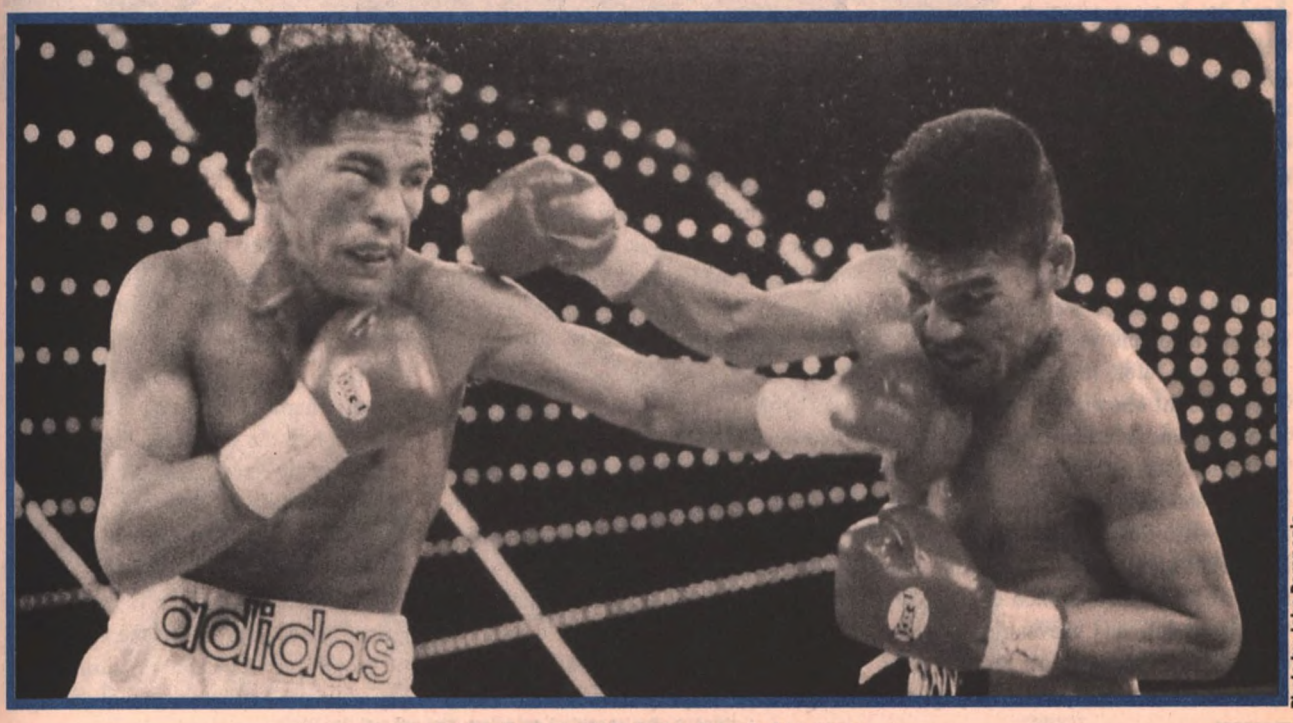


Photo by John Pomponio

Gatti pulls out half-blind miracle against Rodriguez

EVANDER HOLYFIELD KO 11 MIKE TYSON

November 9, 1996

They turned out in hordes, lining the rows and walls of the glitzy MGM Grand Garden. There were 16,325 of them to be exact, not to mention the several millions who were tuning in on their television sets all around the world. These were The Doubters.

Praying and singing gospel songs inside his locker room, draped in a purple robe, was The Believer.

Evander Holyfield had promised for 10 years that he would beat this man, the invincible giant, the indestructible machine, the WBA heavyweight champion named Mike Tyson. But the world had seen the aging, burnt-out gladiator engage in one battle too many, including the lackluster win over Bobby Czyz just six months earlier, and the doubts lingered in the form of imposing 25-1 odds.

Tyson had been gobbling up every scrap of meat thrown his way since his release from the cage in Indiana, but somewhere deep inside, Holyfield knew. Holyfield knew that Tyson was going into war without his deadliest weapon: intimidation. Holyfield knew that Tyson was not ready for the type of resistance that "The Real Deal" would subject him to. Holyfield knew that if he pressed hard enough, Tyson would eventually wilt. And Holyfield possessed a strong, unyielding faith that all of this was true.

An hour later, the most anticipated heavyweight showdown since Tyson-Spinks became an instant classic.

It didn't matter that there was enough hugging and holding to make a Meg Ryan movie with. Several rounds of Tyson-Holyfield I were actually a lot like the infamous O.J. Simpson Bronco chase. They were long, dull, and uneventful. Yet, you couldn't take your eyes off it. Something dramatic could happen at any given moment.

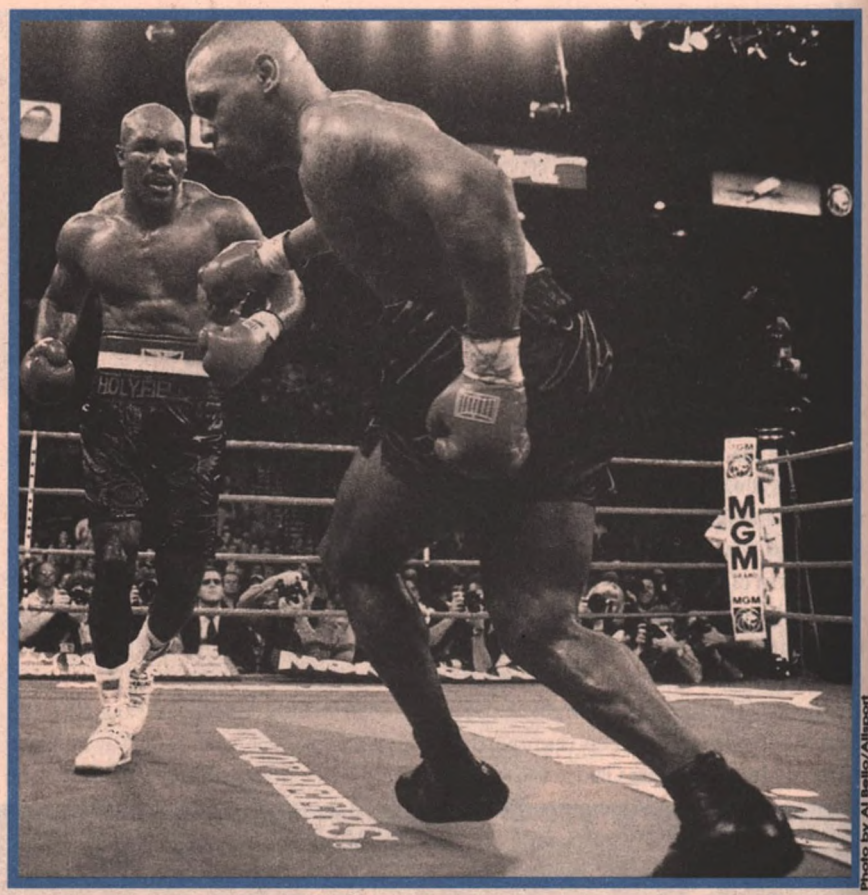


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Holyfield moves in to put the Tyson myth to rest

At two minutes of the sixth round, that "something" finally did. The Believer delivered a left hook high on Tyson's torso, knocking the champ onto the seat of his pants. You could see it in the eyes of the ringside viewers. You could see it in Tyson's eyes, too. Little by little, Holyfield was converting The Doubters into Believers.

Instead, the doubts painted a picture of frustration across Tyson's face in the rounds to come. He could break neither Holyfield's will nor his spirit.

As the combatants approached the championship rounds, Holyfield let loose an overhand right that found Tyson's left temple. A wobbly Tyson would then walk into a straight right-handed bomb that left him staggering backward aimlessly like a barroom drunk.

What followed was the most invigorating, the most sensational 10 seconds of boxing we'd see all decade. It was then that Holyfield battered the desperate Tyson to a pulp, digging frantically to notch his greatest triumph.

Although the bell conveniently intervened, nothing could save Tyson in round 11 from the relentless onslaught of the Holy Man. Not his deafening punching power, not his panicky trainers, not even God Almighty.

After all, at the time referee Mitch Halpern stepped in to halt the brutal massacre, the faith of God was in the other guy's corner. And by the end of the night, surely, so was ours.

IVAN ROBINSON W 10 ARTURO GATTI

August 22, 1998

The rubble was scattered amidst a cloud of dust. The smoke from this detonation was still lifting through the rafters. The wide-eyed observers surrounding the roped battleground at the Atlantic City Convention Center had just witnessed a nuclear war.

The Celtics-Lakers, Cowboys-49ers, The War of the Worlds, The War of the Roses, Star Wars. They all seemed like mere slapfights compared with the battle of 135-pounders that lit up the sky one explosive summer night in '98.

Arturo Gatti vs. Ivan Robinson. You really don't need to say more. Putting the two together in a professional prize ring proved to be the same as mixing fire with gasoline. It was a high-powered blast.

In one corner was Robinson, whose idea of offense is to keep the fists flying at all times, disregarding any openings to being countered or any chances of running out of steam. In the other corner was Gatti, a tough-as-nails brawler whose idea of defense is to block his opponent's offerings with his face.

It was hard to distinguish one round from the next. They all looked nearly identical in savage brutality.

After Robinson came out smoking, blasting away on Gatti in the opening round, the spark ignited in Gatti's belly, a burning desire to return the fire. That's precisely what he did. By round three, as the blood began to flow, all technique, all tactical logic went down for the count. This fight may as well have been fought on the streets of Philly.

As we watched the hellish battle unfold, we wondered what was keeping these combatants up. We wondered how they could possibly be human. Right hand bomb from Robinson. Left hand counter from Gatti. Robinson's in trouble. Now Gatti's in trouble.

The deciding factor of the war between Gatti and Robinson came down to how much ammo one man had in his arsenal. Robinson's remarkable conditioning allowed him to be just a little bit busier, just a little bit sharper, and just a little bit better than Gatti.

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Gatti catches the free-swinging Robinson with a right

With Gatti sensing he needed a Travolta-like comeback in the final round, he nearly found that one redeeming punch that's bailed him out of defeat time and time again. A left-handed cannonball stopped Robinson dead in his tracks, drilling him back into the ropes on rubber-chicken legs. But as Gatti moved in for the finish with less than a minute remaining, it turned out to be too little, too late to upend Robinson's thrilling decision victory.

The fight was so electrifying, so satisfying, they did it again just four months later. Since then, Gatti has slipped out of contention, and Robinson was manhandled by Angel Manfredy in April '99. Looking back, the atomic blast of August 22, 1998, may have destroyed not one, but two great careers.

HONORABLE MENTION

The spaceship landed somewhere up in section 101 of Madison Square Garden. The bizarre creature emerged into view and danced behind a white curtain for the better part of 10 minutes. He gyrated his hips, he strutted his stuff, he boogied his way down the aisle to the tune of "Men In Black," the white confetti littering his path.

Prince Naseem Hamed looked a lot more like an alien from Mars than an alien from England. The night was December 19, 1997, and the undefeated featherweight came to conquer the universe, starting with the United States, and veteran **Kevin Kelley**. To witness this ridiculous prefight carnival, one would never expect that the act that followed Hamed's walk-in antics would actually exceed it.

Hamed-Kelley did not make our Top 10 Fights of the Decade list but, damn, it sure came close. The clash of 126-pounders left the wild Garden gathering in a frenzy as each fighter tasted the canvas three times during the power-punching extravaganza. In the end, it was the alien who prevailed, as a Hamed left hand dropped Kelley for good in the fourth round.

The toe-to-toe slugfest bore a striking similarity to another of the decade's greats, a 12-round war on February 18, 1992, again featuring **Kelley**. This time, it was "The Flushing Flash" who would have the last say, grinding out a heart-stopping 12-round win over **Troy Dorsey**.

Just three months later, before he became a two-time heavyweight champion, **Michael Moorer** engaged in a scintillating five-round classic with **Bert Cooper**, a hellish scrap that reminded us of a heavyweight Hagler-Hearns. Both men hit the canvas twice, but it was Cooper who would ultimately stay down for good.

The same could not be said for **Julio Cesar Chavez**. Chavez had never tasted the canvas in his stellar career and he had never tasted defeat. Not until he faced **Frankie Randall** in January '94. Although the Mexican legend got up from the 11th-round knockdown, Chavez was knocked back down when the scorecards favored Randall.

Two fights among the decade's best just aren't enough for **Arturo Gatti**. He had one more classic just outside the top 10 that we won't soon forget, the October 1997 night in Atlantic City when he rose from the ashes to coldcock **Gabriel Ruelas** with a fifth-round TKO. We also won't forget **Merqui Sosa's** technical draw with **Prince Charles Williams** in January 1995, a war so brutal that both men were deemed unable to continue. Nor will we let **Saman Sorjaturong's** dramatic seventh-round conquering of **Chiquita Gonzalez** in 1995 escape our memory banks. And it'll be especially hard to forget **Paulie Ayala's** initiation to big-time boxing when he overwhelmed **Johnny Tapia** by a close decision, since it just happened in the summer of '99.

Photo by Al Bello

Hamed enjoys a "Flash" knockdown

Come to think of it, we probably won't be forgetting, **Ricardo Lopez'** split-decision triumph over **Rosendo Alvarez** in November '98, certainly the best fight in the history of boxing's smallest division, or **Jorge Castro's** come-from-behind ninth-round disposal of **John David Jackson** in December of '94.

And in the decade to come, we're hoping that these pugilistic warriors and the generation of gladiators that replaces them over the next 10 years won't be forgetting us either, and will continue putting it all on the line for personal glory and for our entertainment. ■

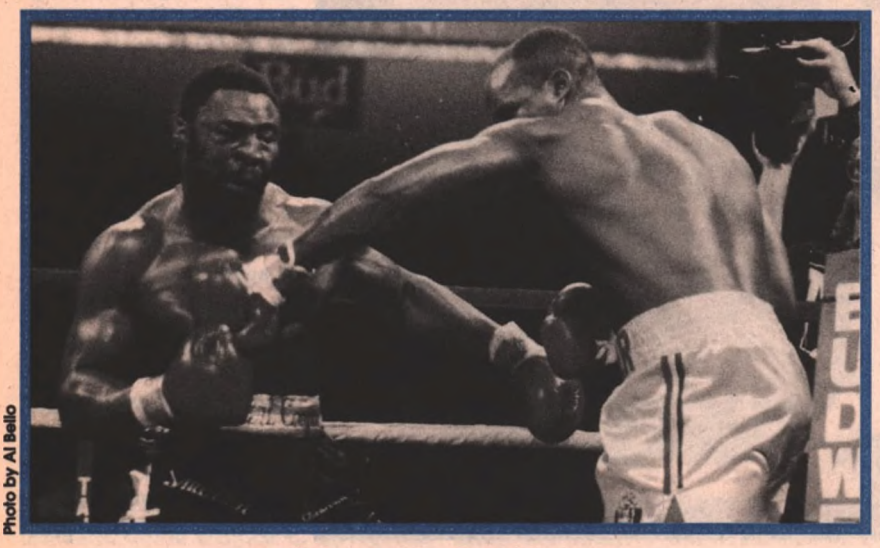


Photo by Al Bello

Moorer rearranges Cooper's features

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Mike Tyson No-Contest 1 Orlin Norris
David Tua KO 2 Shane Sutcliffe
Vitaly Klitschko KO 3 Ed Mahone
Chris Byrd KO 2 Val Smith
Kirk Johnson KO 1 Rodolfo Marin
Arthur Williams W 10 Daren Zenner
Arthur Williams KO 6 Dan Ward
James Toney W 10 Ramon Garbey
Razor Ruddock KO 1 Jose Ribalta
Brian Nielsen W 8 Dale Crowe
Willi Fischer W 10 Kim Weber
David Bostice W 10 Everett Martin
Shazzon Bradley W 6 Sedreck Fields
Duncan Dokiwari W 6 Agustin Corpus
Sean Carrigan KO 3 Kevin Brister
Ray Austin KO 4 Cisse Salif

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Marcelo Dominguez KO 3
Argemiro Dos Santos
Adam Watt KO 1 Mosese Sorovi
Billy Lewis W 6 Ali Sanchez

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Eric Harding W 10 Ray Berry
David Telesco KO 11 Will Taylor
Glen Kelly W 12 Sam Soliman
Jorge Castro W 10
Juan Carlos Gimenez
Fred Moore KO 3 Don Giron

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Markus Beyer W 12 Richie Woodhall
(Wins WBC Title)
Charles Brewer KO 3 Reggie Strickland
Mads Larsen KO 5 Simon Brown
James Butler KO 7 Bryant Brannon
Syd Vanderpool KO 7 Alfonso Daniels
Eric Lucas W 10 Alex Hilton
David Starie W 12 Teimouraz Kikelidze
Kevin Palmer KO 5 Samart Cholungsak
Yoshinori Nishizawa W 12 Nico Toriri
Soon Botes KO 4 Samson Khoza
Toks Owoh KO 3 Eddie Haley
Mario Veit W 12 Ray Domenge
Jose Spearman Tech. Draw 3
James Crawford
Kippy Warren W 8 Tarick Salmaci
Laila Ali KO 1 April Fowler

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Alain Bonnamie W Disq. 12 Adrian Dodson
Anthony Fields W Disq. 5 Luis Carmona
Julio Garcia KO 7 Kenny Lopez

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Carlos Bojorquez D 10 Fidel Avendano
Mpush Makambi KO 2 Ensley Bingham
Roman Karmazin KO 4 Yuri Epifantsev
Kookyul Song KO 11 Hiroki Tomi
Said Bennajem W 10 Olivier Meunier
Hercules Kyvelos W 10 Greg Johnson
Anthony Farnell KO 1 Javier Santibanez
Fathi Missaoui W 8 Gilberto Flores

WELTERWEIGHTS
Andrei Pestriaev KO 6 Alessandro Duran
David Kamau W 12 Marco Antonio Lizarraga
Peter Malinga W 12 Spencer McCracken
Derek Roche W 12 Scott Dixon
Lemuel Nelson W 8 Gary Richardson
Hector Camacho Jr. W 8 William Rojas

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Thomas Damgaard KO 7 Miguel Pena-Lopez
James Crayton W 10 Pedro Saiz
Manuel Garnica W 10 Gabe Ruelas
Allan Vester W 12 Giuseppe Sauli
Ricky Quiles W 12 Cosme Rivera
Ricky Hatton KO 4 Bernard Paul
Eamonn Magee KO 1 Radoslav Gaidev

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Artur Grigorijan KO 5 Michael Clark
Derrick Gainer KO 5 Sergio Reyes
Francisco Cruz D 10 Edwin Santana
Jermaine Fields KO 5 Theon Holland
Eduardo Morales KO 1 Ismael Agustini
Alberto Sicurella W 10 Victor Paz
Juan Lazcano KO 2 Jose Montes
Rick Roberts D 10 Tadashi Yuba
Michael Ayers KO 6 Pablo Sarmiento

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Diego Corrales KO 7 Roberto Garcia
(Wins IBF Title)
Jongkwon Baek W 12 Lakva Sim
(Wins WBA Title)
Reynante Jamili KO 2 Reynante Sasi
David Santos W 10 Freddy Cruz
Jorge Barrios W 12 Affif Djelti
Dean Pithie KO 2 Frank Kiwanuka
Mick O'Malley KO 1 Richard Evatt
Chelo Diaz W 10 Daniel Jimenez
Kengo Nagashima W 10 Yangsoo Sung
Takashi Koshimoto KO 4 Sukhwi Cho

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Naseem Hamed W 12 Cesar Soto
(Wins WBC Title)
Willie Jorrin Tech. Win 5 Juan Torres
Steve Robinson KO 10 Claude Chinon
Augie Sanchez KO 6 Daniel Jimenez
Tony Wehbee KO 8 Takeo Imaoka
Francky Leroy W 10 David Mathieu

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Erik Morales W 12 Wayne McCullough
(Retains WBC Title)
Antonio Cermeno W 12 Yober Ortega
Michael Brodie KO 6 Drew Docherty
Jesus Rojas KO 1 Mustapha Hame
Jose Luis Valbuena KO 10 Carlos Barreto
Yutaka Manabe KO 5 Hideki Takayama
Emmanuel Lucero KO 3 Jose Beato

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Paulie Ayala W 12 Sahoiu Sithchai Condo
(Retains WBA Title)
Koji Fujiwara KO 6 Napa Kiatwanchai
Motonari Koshima KO 3 Takato Toguchi

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Damaen Kelly KO 4 Igor Gerasimov
Nolito Cabato KO 6 Jungro Cho
Masamori Tokuyama W 12
Pone Saengmorokot
Hayato Asai W 10 Kangung Lee

FLYWEIGHTS
Irene Pacheco KO 4 Ferid Ben Jeddou
(Retains IBF Title)
Jason Booth KO 10 Keith Knox
Shiro Yahiro W 10 Pilkoo Kang
Marcos Ramon Obregon W 12
Wellington Vicente
Malcolm Tunacao W 12 Rio Sumampong

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Yeosam Choi W 12 Saman Sorjaturong
(Wins WBC Title)
Hidenobu Honda W 10 Atsushi Sano
Wolf Tokimitsu W 10 Agus Ray
Rocky Palma D 10 Takahiko Mizuno

STRAWWEIGHTS
Noel Arambulet W 12 Joma Gamboa
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Satoru Abe KO 2 Rick Paciones
Luis Lazarte KO 3 Carlos Eluaiza

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

He had lost three straight. He was fighting a living legend who was merely tuning up for a world title shot. "Slick" Willy Wise, though a well-schooled, capable boxer, was supposed to do little more than provide some rounds for Julio Cesar Chavez before eventually crumbling like a good "opponent" should. But Wise didn't follow the script. It was Chavez who crumbled, putting Wise's name alongside Frankie Randall and Oscar De La Hoya as the only men to have defeated the Mexican great.

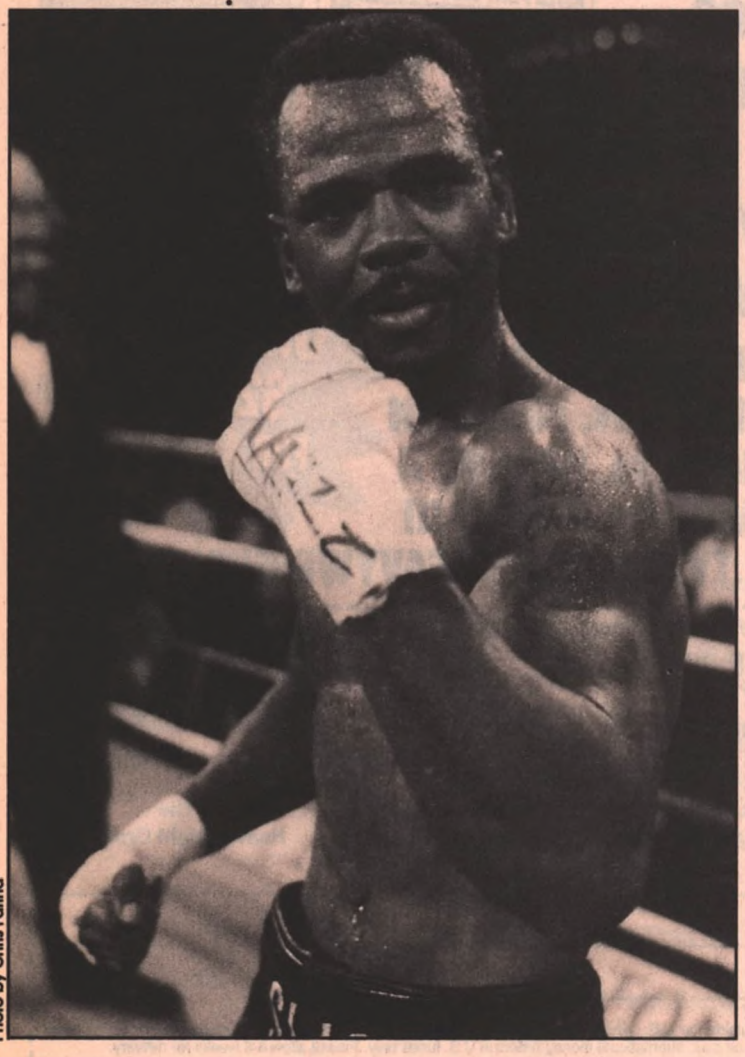
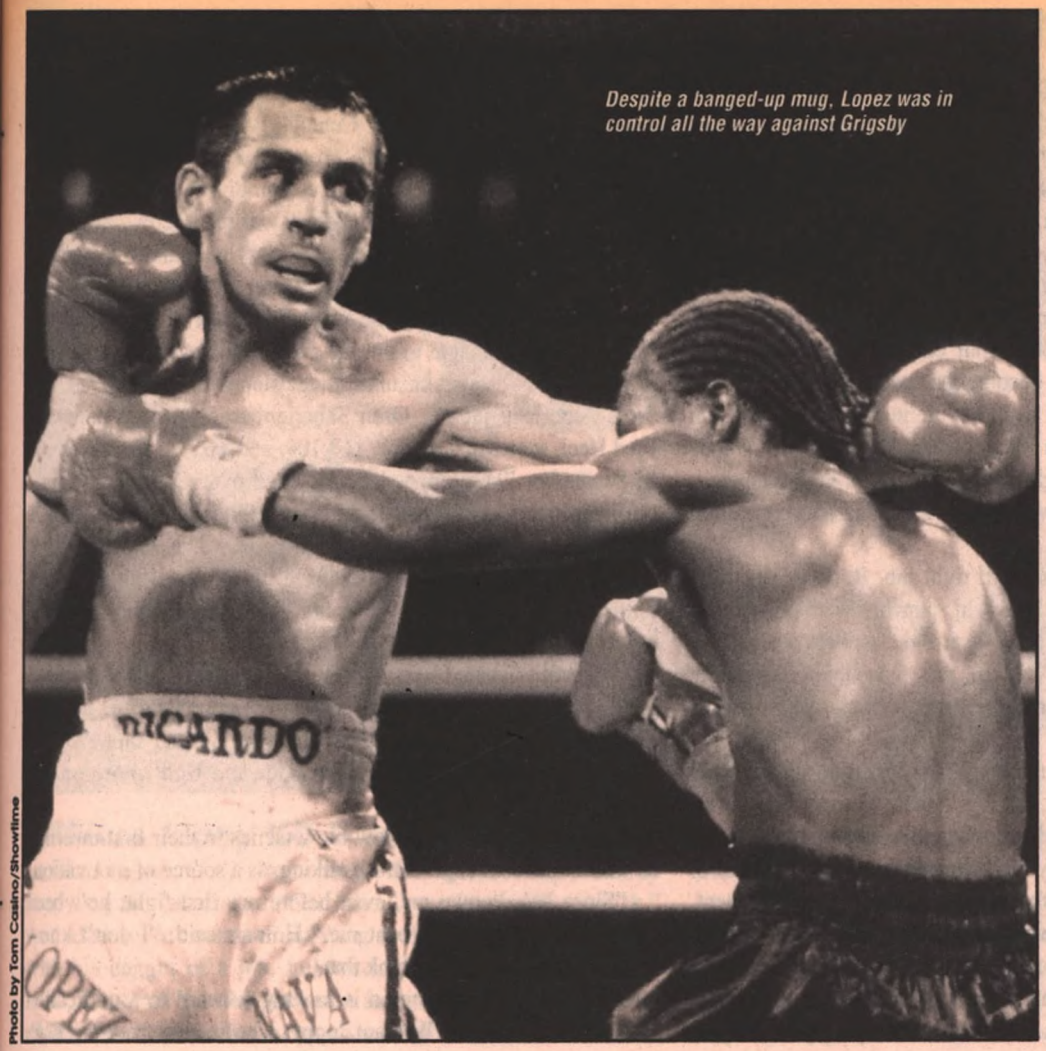


Photo by Chris Farina

Wise's previous three bouts were a close decision loss to Derrell Coley in March '98, a ninth-round knockout loss to Santos Cardona six months later, and a tough-luck technical decision defeat to Edgar Ruiz in March '99. Chavez' last three fights were blowout wins over journeymen Verdell Smith and Marty Jakubowski and a defeat to De La Hoya during which, before quitting disgracefully, Chavez accounted himself well against one of the world's best fighters. But those fights were all in the past, and the reality on the night of October 2 was that Chavez didn't have the speed or conditioning to compete with the 32-year-old pet food salesman from Long Island. Wise made beating the future Hall of Famer look downright easy, as he won an upset unanimous decision over 10 rounds to take home THE RING's Fighter of the Month honors.

• • • •

Willy Wise



Despite a banged-up mug, Lopez was in control all the way against Grigsby

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Ricardo Lopez W 12 Will Grigsby

Las Vegas, Nevada: Lopez showed why he is a perennial pound-for-pound entrant, putting the less experienced Grigsby through a punishing boxing clinic en route to taking the IBF junior flyweight title on a unanimous 12-round decision at the Las Vegas Hilton. After dominating the strawweight class for nearly a decade, Lopez finally tacked on three extra pounds and gave reason to believe he will dominate the 108-pound class in similar fashion—if he stays in the boxing game long enough.

Lopez, 108, Mexico, who gave up the WBC/WBA 105-pound championships to get this title shot, needed the early rounds to get his punching in sync. But Grigsby, 107, St. Paul, Minnesota, was too inactive to capitalize in those early rounds, and only won the fourth and eighth rounds on THE RING's scorecard. The gutsy champion was completely dominated once Lopez found the range.

Lopez, 32, earning $100,000 plus perks from Mexican TV, continues to hold one of the sport's longest unbeaten streaks at 48-0-1 (35). Grigsby, 29, the lightest American-born champion ever, earned $200,000, the largest purse of his career, but saw his resume dip to 14-2-1 (6).

It was not surprising that Lopez was off-target early against the lateral-moving Grigsby, since the slightly rusty Mexican was making his first start since November '98, when he scored a sensational split-decision win over Nicaragua's Rosendo Alvarez. But Lopez still took the early rounds, despite coming out of an exchange with Grigsby early in the third round with a small cut over his left eye. By the sixth round, Lopez, moving in behind head and shoulder feints, was teeing off on the IBF ruler like he owned him and had both of Grigsby's eyes cut and swelling by the end.

Still, it was Lopez' left eye that drew the attention of referee Joe Cortez (USA) as the 11th round was winding down. But ringside physician Flip Homansky found the wound had not worsened, and Lopez was immediately waved back into action. He continued to pound Grigsby with double and triple hooks to the head and body until the final bell, while Grigsby remained firm despite being outpunched at every turn.

In the judges' official scoring, Bill Graham (USA) saw it 118-110, Mike Glienna (USA) voted 116-112, and Joe Pasquale (USA) had it 117-112, all for Lopez.

At the postfight press conference, Lopez, wearing a bandage over his left eye, tapped Grigsby on the shoulder. "I put my hand out to Will because he is a great fighter and a great champion," Lopez explained. "For the people who didn't know his name before, they sure will now."

Grigsby, a cinch to have an Excedrin the morning after, had no excuses.

"There's no question how great a world champion Ricardo Lopez is," said the deposed champion. "He proved that here tonight. I thought I might make him tire in the late rounds after his long layoff. But his skill and speed were too much.

"I'll be back. This was a great learning experience. There are a lot of titles out there, and Lopez isn't going to fight forever. Don King feels I'll be fighting for another title after I take a little rest."

That title shot may come sooner than Grigsby initially expected, as Lopez indicated after the bout that he was contemplating retirement. If the Mexican great does wave goodbye to the game, Grigsby may be in line to fight for the vacant title.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Don King Productions
(10-2-99)
Jack Welsh

Francisco Castillejo KO 7 Paolo Roberto

Leganes, Spain: WBC super welterweight champion Castillejo, 154, Spain, lived up to his side of the bargain, but Oscar De La Hoya didn't. Their showdown, originally scheduled for December but put on hold by "The Golden Boy's" defeat to Felix Trinidad, will now not take place until at least March.

Castillejo, 46-4 (30), played it cool at the Pabellon Europa to gain a unique place in the annals of Spanish fight history. After conceding the early rounds to southpaw Roberto, 153½, Sweden, he asserted himself from round four onward and methodically wore his challenger down to become the first from his country to retain a world title twice. He won the title in an upset from Keith Mullings and defeated Costa Rican challenger Humberto Aranda in his first defense. If the fight with De La Hoya does happen, it will undoubtedly bring the sequence to a sudden and unpleasant conclusion.

Boxing smartly behind a sharp right jab, Roberto, 30, took charge of the first three rounds. But his punches were points winners, not pulverizing shots. The 31-year-old Castillejo was patient and sensed that Roberto, 19-2-1 (6), was incapable of inflicting telling damage. When he upped the pace, he was sure he would turn the fight irrevocably.

He did. Hard punches to the body of Roberto began to take a toll. The Swede tired visibly, his legs unable to carry him out of harm's way. Castillejo needed no invitation to step up his attack.

He was in total control by the fifth and remorselessly fired at will throughout the sixth, with Roberto taking fierce punishment. Roberto was a spent force when he returned to his corner with half the fight gone. Castillejo soon ended his misery. With two-fisted attacks, he unloaded punches on the defenseless Roberto, finally landing a three-punch combination that prompted Belgian referee Daniel Van De Wiele to intervene.

"I was waiting for the referee to stop it. I didn't want him to take unnecessary punishment," said Castillejo afterward. "I want De La Hoya. I am ready and I will get to him too."

Promoter: Rimer Box

(9-10-99)

Brian Doogan

Keith Holmes W 12 Andrew Council

Washington, D.C.: WBC middleweight champ Holmes has spent his past two fights exacting revenge and regaining respect. He did so most recently by making the first defense of his second WBC title reign with a 12-round unanimous decision win over Andrew Council at the MCI Center.

Holmes, 35-2 (23), demonstrated a solid chin while exchanging from close range. When he got tagged by a sneaky left hook from Council, 30-7-3 (20), over his own right hand in the second round, his beard, coupled with his boxing ability, allowed him to escape harm. And Holmes, 158½, showed power. In the ninth round, a classic southpaw right hook caused Council, 159½, to fall forward flat on his face. To his credit, Council, Washington, D.C., rose at the count of eight, shortly before the bell sounded to end the round, but his hopes of becoming a champion were all but eliminated once the devastating knockdown was recorded.

Holmes, 30, who lives in Bowie, Maryland, and trains out of the Sugar Ray Leonard Training Center in Palmer Park, hammered Council, 32, along the ropes for much of the final three rounds, but was unable to put the game challenger away and had to settle for his second unanimous decision win over Council. The three American judges, Oren Schellenberger, Tony Perez, and Fred Ucci, scored it 116-111, 117-109, and 116-110, respectively. In September '94, Holmes had prevailed over Council in a fight during which Council lost three points for repeated low blows. This time, it was Holmes who lost a point, when veteran referee Arthur Mercante Sr. (USA) penalized him in the 10th round for hitting on the break. Other than that, however, Holmes fought a nearly perfect fight.

"I noticed Council was throwing wild shots," said Holmes. "I had to pay attention to that and adjust my fight plan to set up what I knew would be a chance to hit him with a good shot. When I saw him throwing wild shots, it made me fight more on the inside."

Holmes used Council's low-blow tactics in their first meeting, as well as the challenger's trash talking, as a source of motivation.

"Since he's known me, even before our first fight, he's been telling everyone he can beat me," Holmes said. "I don't know where he has the right to think that."

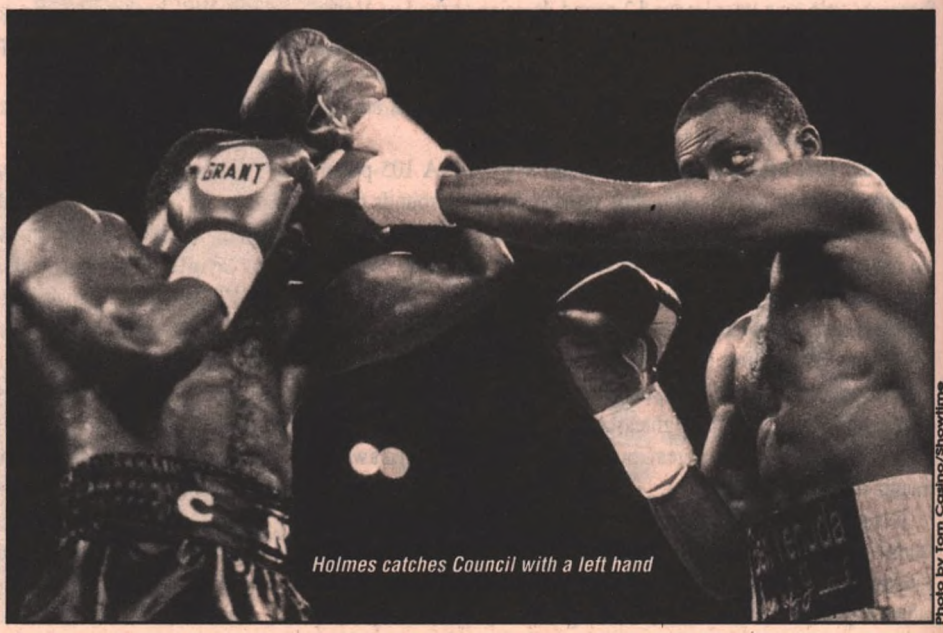
Now, the WBC champion is looking forward to a unification bout with WBA titlist William Joppy, who is also from the D.C. area and, like Holmes, is promoted by Don King.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

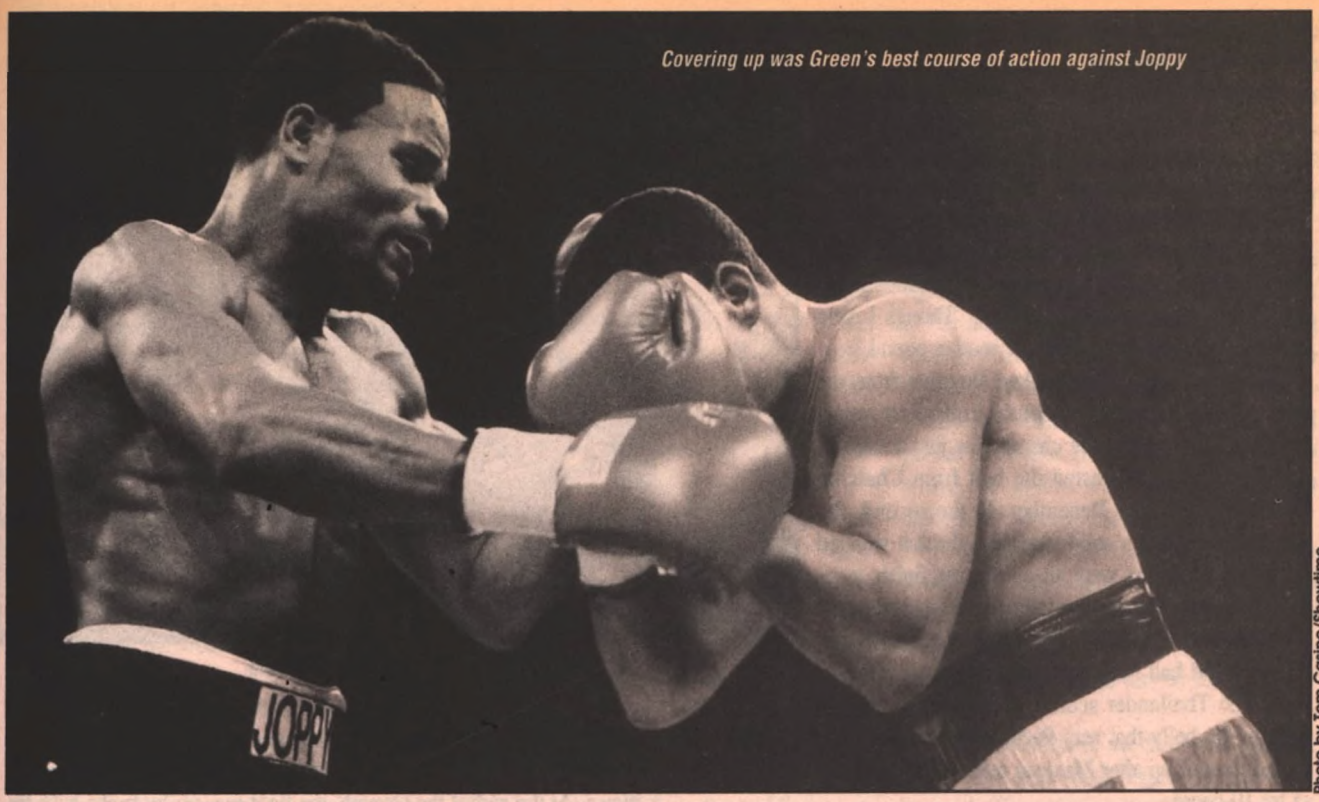
(9-24-99)

A.J. Dadd



Holmes catches Council with a left hand

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime



Covering up was Green's best course of action against Joppy

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

William Joppy KO 7 Julio Cesar Green

Washington, D.C.: Defending WBA middleweight champ Joppy's goal was simple: "Get Julio Cesar Green off my back." And after seven rounds of stabbing at the Dominican challenger with his dagger of a jab, followed by his sledgehammer right hand, it appears that the champion from Seabrook, Maryland, did exactly that in his rubber match with Green at the MCI Center.

Joppy, 28-1-1 (22), outboxed, outslugged, and outhustled Green, 25-4 (17), as he won by seventh-round TKO in the second defense of his second reign before 8,212 hometown fans. Joppy had won every round on the cards of all three judges, and had opened an inch-long gash over Green's left eye when referee Kenny Chevalier (USA) called time to have the cut checked by ringside doctor Dawne Carroll. The fight was stopped at 1:52 of the seventh.

"Julio Cesar Green is a tough guy. He came to fight," said Joppy, 29. "But I knew he couldn't keep on taking those right hands. I knew, sooner or later, that I would either cut him or knock him out."

Joppy defeated mandatory challenger Green, 32, for the second straight time after losing a controversial decision in the first of their three meetings. It was also the second knockout in as many comeback fights for Joppy since he suffered a neck injury in a January car accident. He had knocked out Napoleon Pitt in one round in a July non-title bout.

Joppy spent the first four months of his six-month recovery period from a potentially paralyzing injury to his C-7 vertebrae wearing a neck brace. He was cleared to begin exercising in April, and to begin sparring in June.

"The rest away from boxing actually did me a lot of good," Joppy said. "I came into this fight at 100 percent. There were times where I've fought with sore hands, sore arms, stuff like that, but I just kept it to myself. But tonight, my body was completely refreshed coming into this fight."

Joppy, 158½, wobbled Green with a right hand in the second round and reddened the mandatory challenger's face with his jab. There were several good exchanges in the third, and while Joppy won most of them, Green, 159½, did land a couple of left hooks and a right to gain some respect from the champion. Unfortunately for Green, he also gained a cut on his left eyelid that would worsen in the ensuing rounds.

In the fourth, Green landed a big right cross along the ropes that got Joppy's attention. The champ came back, however, with several overhand rights, a left hook, and a right hand. Joppy boxed more in the fifth and sixth, jabbing and finishing with nice combinations, but the challenger, growing desperate, retaliated by trying to rough Joppy up during clinches. In the seventh, Joppy landed several hard right hands to Green's eye, one of which caused a stream of blood to trickle down his cheek, leading to the inevitable stoppage.

Following the victory, Joppy said he was looking toward unification bouts with either WBC champ Keith Holmes, who, like Joppy, is promoted by Don King, or IBF titlist Bernard Hopkins.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(9-24-99)

A.J. Dadd

Medgoen 3K-Battery KO 3 Manny Pacquiao

Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand: Unbeaten Thailander Medgoen (real name: Medgoen Lukchaopormasak), 112, captured the WBC flyweight title with an impressive kayo win over defending champ Pacquiao, 113, at 1:32 of the third round. But even had

Pacquiao emerged victorious, he wouldn't have exited the ring as champion.

Pacquiao failed to make the stipulated weight of 112 pounds, scaling at 113½ pounds initially. Though given a time allowance of two hours, the already drained Filipino could only reduce to 113, thereby officially losing the title on the scale.

"I weighed 135 pounds when I started training a month before, so I had to reduce 23 pounds in 30 days," the ex-champ said afterward. "Though I went down to 113, I couldn't sweat off another pound."

Pacquiao, a tall lefty, looked sluggish from the start. Medgoen opened cautiously in the first round, but soon realized that the champ was just a shell of the man who had wrested the belt from Chatchai Dutchboy Gym last December. In the second, the Thailander landed a solid straight right that stunned Pacquiao. Medgoen went all out for the finish, tenaciously stalking the groggy, backpedalling champ.

Medgoen, 19-0 (12), remained very aggressive in the third and had Pacquaio staggering from pillar to post. The Thailander scored with a heavy straight right to the belly that sent Pacquiao to the deck, and he just barely pulled himself up after Mexican referee Lupe Garcia reached the end of his 10-count.

It was a miserable defeat for Pacquiao, 25-2 (16), who made just one successful defense of the WBC title. It's unbelievable that his handlers failed to keep an eye his conditioning and allowed him to be idle until just a month before the title go. That poor handling cost him the precious world title, and the Philippines now possesses no world crowns, as Luisito Espinosa, Gerry Penalosa, and Pacquiao have all forfeited their thrones in recent months.

Promoter: Virat Vajiratanawongse

(9-17-99)

Joe Koizumi

Photo by Holly Stein/Allsport/OMB

Mosley fires a right hand at Rivera

Shane Mosley KO 10 Wilfredo Rivera

Temecula, California: Mosley, in deciding to abandon the IBF lightweight title and move up to the star-studded welterweight division, traded one strain for another. At 135 pounds, Sugar Shane could no longer handle the strain he put on his body trying to make weight. But at 147, based on what a strong fight veteran contender Rivera put up, it seems Mosley will now be forced to strain himself during fights, something he rarely had to do when ruling over the lightweight division.

Mosley, 146½, Pomona, California, came out looking to make a statement in the opening round, as he loaded up with lunging hooks and combinations so quick that Rivera couldn't get anything done. But Rivera, 147, Puerto Rico, was never hurt during Mosley's opening-round onslaught, and with the undefeated favorite slightly winded, Rivera worked his way into the fight in the second round. He timed Mosley with several right hands over Sugar Shane's jab, and dug a hard left to the body late in the round. Mosley got his own left hook to the ribs cooking in round three and connected with a pair of hard right hands to Rivera's jaw. By the end of the round, Rivera had a cut beneath his left eye, and the eye was beginning to swell.

The fight went back and forth over the next four rounds, with Rivera, 30, throwing more punches and backing his opponent up occasionally, while Mosley, 28, landed the cleaner, more powerful blows. At the end of the seventh, the fight was up for grabs, with the fight even on one card, and Mosley up by margins of one and an off-base five points on the other two scoresheets.

But Mosley, influenced partially by how poorly Oscar De La Hoya closed the show the week before in his fight with Felix Trinidad, let loose down the stretch, getting back on his toes and dominating the eighth with busy combinations. Rivera was faring well in the ninth until the final 10 seconds, when the former lightweight champ exploded with a two-fisted power assault that left the Puerto Rican dazed. Mosley came out for the 10th looking as fresh as he had in round one, and he battered Rivera with a pair of clean right hands that forced him to hold. A left-right had Rivera nearly out on his feet with a minute to go, and finally, a combination culminating with a left uppercut to the side of the head sent the valiant underdog down. Referee Robert Byrd (USA) reached the count of five before waving the fight over.

"He has a hard punch. He is the only person who has been able to stop me," Rivera, 30-4-1 (19), said afterward. Actually, Rivera was stopped once before, but the halt came on cuts, not a clean knockout, at the hands of De La Hoya.

"I think I accomplished what I wanted to," the triumphant Mosley, 33-0 (31), said. "I convinced people I have the combination of speed and power. Everybody has to consider me right among the top guys in the welterweight division."

Mosley may get a shot at one of the other top guys early in 2000, as he becomes a logical opponent for either Trinidad or De La Hoya if a rematch between those two can't be made. Otherwise, he'll either try for a shot at WBA champ James Page, or continue to acclimate himself to the welterweight division against another Rivera-level opponent.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Productions

(9-25-99) ■

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 37)

cious enough not to mention our temporary lapse in judgment, and after the appropriate pictures had been taken, boxing's past and present pound-for-pound king retired to the couch to talk.

At first, Jones played with a small ball while he answered questions, either tossing it into the air and catching it, or squeezing it in one of his delicate-looking but deadly fists. It made you wonder exactly how much attention he was paying. But, hey, this was Roy Jones. If he can rip off a six-punch combination in a nano-second, he can certainly answer questions and play with a ball at the same time. But when the topic turned to matters of faith, Jones stopped playing with the ball and gave his words his full concentration.

"God blessed me with a talent that I should use to the best of my ability," said Jones, when asked about motivation. "Every day, I think about how many people in this world don't know their talent, how many people just sit on their talent and do nothing with it. How many people in this world who don't seem to have talent. A lot of people didn't even get two working arms. Some guys can't even walk. So you should take advantage of what you have."

It got deeper.

"I've also learned in my old age that even people who are blind are blessed, because they see the world from a different point of view, a world we never get to see," continued Jones, warming to the topic. "They have a totally different perception of life than we do. That's one thing they have that we can't get. Their imagination is something that we can't even dream of because they have never seen things with their eyes. They see things with their imagination.

"I always used to feel sorry for people who were blind or who couldn't hear or people in sad situations. But you have to realize they might be in a better situation than you are. You never know. God don't make no mistakes. That's why I started looking at things with a different point of view."

There's no disputing that Jones sees the world through a different lens than most mortals, but when it comes to his career, he's nothing if not pragmatic. At the time of THE RING's visit, Jones was still hissed about the Graciano Rocchigiani fight falling apart. Make that doubly hissed. He didn't just lose a payday, he missed an opportunity to dispose of one of his numerous alphabet obligations.

As a one-time "interim champion," Rocchigiani held some bogus claim to a mandatory title shot, and Jones was willing to give it to him at a cut-rate in order to avoid a hassle with the WBC. Now he's still got that dangling over his head, as well as the number-one contenders for the two other belts he wears. It's an endless chore, but Jones seemed willing to give it a try. But, as always, he won't be pushed into anything he doesn't want to do.

"I wanted to fight Rocchigiani to get him out of the way. Then I wanted to fight Richard Hall [the WBA's number-one contender], and get rid of him," said Jones. "Then I was going to do my thing for the IBF title. I think my IBF mandatory is Antonio Tarver, but he may not be ready; he may not have had enough fights under his belt. Then, hopefully, I could have fought Dariusz Michalczewski on PPV in the middle part of the spring."

Jones is keenly aware of how a champion with more than one belt can become a slave to the alphabet group's demands, and takes a philosophical attitude, despite the fact that he's worked so hard to unify the title.

"You do what you can. I try to do things the best I can, but if people don't want to work with me, so be it. People use stuff like that against you, knowing you care. They work you to death because they know you want to keep it so bad. So I never attach myself to nothing."

That apparently includes his three alphabet belts, because Jones obviously has plenty of options. He's taken note of old rival James Toney's resurgence as a cruiserweight, and sounded fairly receptive to the possibility of a rematch with the fighter he made his bones against.

"He's looking real good as a cruiserweight," said Jones. "I like James Toney; I like to see him fight. I hope he gets himself back up to where he was, wins a title or two, does something to make it intriguing for me to fight him again. If he builds his rep back up, maybe we can do something."

There's also the lingering tease of a possible move up to heavyweight. It's a course of action Jones continues to be ambivalent about, seemingly a toy to amuse himself with when things get a dull.

"I may take a shot at the heavyweight title if it came at an opportune time," he said nonchalantly. But when it was suggested that maybe he'd have a better chance of actually winning the heavyweight title if he entered the ring as R.J., his go-for-the-jugular alter ego, Jones shook his head.

"No, Roy Jones Jr. has to do that with the right mind set," said Jones, rejecting the idea of his alternate persona (last seen blowing away previous conqueror Montell Griffin in less than a round) challenging for the heavyweight title. "R.J. can't show up then. He'll get me in trouble. He'll go in there and try to stand toe-to-toe with the heavyweight champ. R.J. ain't got no damned sense."

Regardless of which version of Roy Jones shows up when the moment of truth arrives, if he's going to give the heavyweight title a shot, he'd better do it soon. Jones is 30, and well aware that his time at the top is not eternal.

"The downside of the fame and glamour is that time slips away before you know it," he said. "Sometimes the light shines so bright, you can't see what's around you. And when the light is shut off, everything that was around you is gone. That's why I do what I want to do. Because when it's gone, they might say, well, I don't know how good he was. But he did what he wanted to do and got rich, so he must have been pretty good."

That's a modest ambition for a man of Jones' majestic gifts, and speaks to the duality of his nature. Like a superhero reluctant to use all of his powers, he sits atop the boxing world attempting to bring a degree of restraint to a sport that thrives on excess. This attitude may not be what we want, but it's what we've got. And with a fighter as special as Roy Jones, it just might be enough. ■

Tyson-Norris

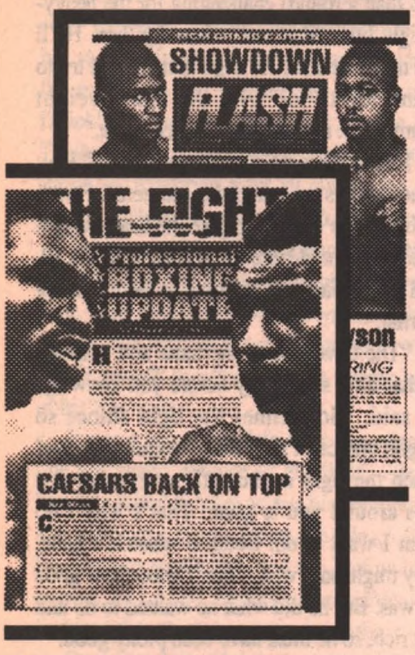
(Continued from page 42)

bout with Tyson, too. George Foreman has said he won't fight again unless it's against Tyson. Why? Because after all the trouble he has caused, Tyson still is the measuring stick. He is the man everyone feels they must defeat to add that much more credibility to their careers. And Tyson also brings the most money.

The division's allure is augmented exponentially the more heavyweight stars there

(Continued on page 64)

Worldwide guide to pro boxing



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Tyson-Norris

(Continued from page 63)

are. And if Tyson can regenerate interest in his career by going abroad and possibly piecing a comeback together, all the big boys will benefit.

For everything to come together, Tyson obviously must perform. One round feeling Norris out wasn't nearly enough to answer those questions that have abounded for the past decade. It can be argued that Tyson hasn't turned in a skillful effort since his 1991 TKO of Razor Ruddock.

Ratner and several other ringside observers, however, did detect something different in those three minutes the Norris fight lasted. Ratner claimed Tyson was operating in ways he hadn't seen in years, moving at the waist, showing side-to-side head movement, working the body.

"It's just unfortunate," Ratner said. "This fight looked like it was going to a be good, solid fight. I was sorry to see it end the way it did, both with the foul and the injury that occurred."

Tyson's co-trainer Tommy Brooks was in disbelief after the no-contest and wondered what would happen next to potentially derail his pupil. But according to Brooks, Tyson was so much stronger mentally and physically for Norris than for Botha, and that it will only be a matter of time before Tyson moves into position to reclaim a heavyweight belt.

"If anyone thinks Mike Tyson is out of this race, he's crazy," Brooks said. "Mike Tyson is in this race and always will be in the race. Fifty percent of Mike Tyson is better than 100 percent of most any other fighter out there."

Whether he takes his act on the road or tries to make a go of it in the U.S., Tyson has to win back fans quickly. They're filing out of the proverbial arena. Without good reason to return, there is a tremendous risk they may never come back. ■

Tim Graham, a freelance writer based in Las Vegas, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

New Faces

(Continued from page 18)

a good technique," said Michel, who coached the Canadian national team from 1992-'98. "Fathi was a dangerous guy as an amateur. We approached him after the Olympics, and he was very interested in what we had to say.

"We want to try to get him the Canadian super welterweight championship by the end of the year, and to the world level by the year 2000, then try and get him a world championship by 2001. We really believe he has the talent to become a world champion. Plus, Fathi is very charismatic. He always draws the attention of people. He would have no problem filling up the Molson Centre [in Montreal]. He's the kind of guy who can draw a crowd. He's a young man with a lot of enthusiasm. He's very, very cooperative with anything we ask him to do. People fall in love with him very easily."

Missaoui, 25, signed an agreement with InterBox in 1998. When he arrived in Canada, he already had a built-in advantage, besides his engaging personality: He was able to speak French. There was one other plus: world experience. As a boy growing up on the coast of Tunisia, boxing was Missaoui's passport to another universe. It opened up worlds Missaoui could only dream of, and enabled him to walk through the doorways of presidents' homes, and into view of influential boxing people like Michel.

Missaoui started boxing at age 12 when he was introduced to the sport by his older brother Lofti. Lofti let his younger brother tag along when he was working out, and before Fathi knew it, he was hooked.

"I wasn't the kind of guy who was getting into streetfights all of the time, and either was my brother," Missaoui said. "Where I come from, there were two major sports: soccer and boxing. I took up boxing. I was good at soccer, but when I first started, I was smaller than everyone else and I got pushed around. My brother was into boxing, so I thought I'd give it a try. I come from a little, little town that borders Nigeria. It was not a rough part of Tunisia, but to have a chance to get outside and travel to other cities, boxing was a good opportunity to do that."

When he was 14, Missaoui won the Tunisian national championship for his age group, but says there was still some trepidation at that stage of his progress. He was, admittedly, a little afraid venturing into the unknown, because with each victory came a heavier dose of competition. He was put in against older kids and beat them. He was put

in against kids who he thought were tougher than him—and he beat them, too.

Eventually, Missaoui made the national team. Maintaining a strict lifestyle was the only serious adjustment Missaoui had to make. For the first time in his life, he had to cook for himself and manage his spare time. For someone as rambunctious as Missaoui, it was a little frustrating. He gained some weight living the good life and was introduced to strength training. He learned to sit on his punches more, making him even more dangerous.

By 18, Missaoui had a serious debate on his mind: whether or not to turn pro. The thought of one day capturing an Olympic gold medal prevented the jump. Missaoui was always driven by that dream. His quest, however, was stymied by Germany's Oktay Urkal, the eventual silver medalist, in the Olympic semifinals. Still, Missaoui received a hero's welcome when he arrived home in Tunisia with the bronze.

"My goal was to get a gold medal ever since I was young, and everyone was telling me it was so difficult to even get a medal at all at the Olympics," Missaoui recalled. "When I got back home, I was treated like a national hero. I was named Athlete of the Year in Tunisia for 1996 and invited by our president to his house."

Since then, Missaoui's name has spread to other corners of pro boxing in Canada. He has certainly drawn the attention of Russ Anber, who trains and manages middleweight contender Otis Grant and emerging junior middleweight Hercules Kyvelos.

"This kid Missaoui and Hercules are going to be on a collision course at the Molson Centre," Anber predicted. "In my opinion, I feel Herc and Fathi are two of the biggest prospects in Canada. That would be a main event fight that could draw up to 20,000 people. Fathi comes with a good package. He has extensive amateur experience. The guy is for real. He has decent power, good speed, and he's a sharp puncher. He doesn't waste shots; he lands them on the target where he's aiming. He's only had a few pro fights, and I've seen them all. I really can't say what flaws he has, because right now he's a complete package. The only obvious thing he doesn't have is the full pro experience, but he has far more amateur experience than Hercules has."

Now, when Michel thinks about it, the mission does not seem so impossible. ■

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of June 1999, the WBC as of September 1999, and the IBF as of September 1999.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Evander Holyfield (USA)	**–**	**C**	**C**
John Ruiz (USA)	1	2	3
Michael Grant (USA)	2	6	–
David Tua (NZ)	3	–	1
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	4	7	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	5	–	10
Larry Donald (USA)	6	3	4
Hasim Rahman (USA)	7	–	5
Henry Akinwande (GB)	8	1	6
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	9	11	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	10	–	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	4	8
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	24	5	–
Jade Scott (USA)	22	8	–
Derrick Jefferson (USA)	28	9	–
Dick Ryan (USA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Chris Byrd (USA)	19	–	7
Danell Nicholson (USA)	–	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Saul Montana (MEX)	1	1	1
James Toney (USA)	2	–	10
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	3	7	4
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	4	–	–
Alex Gonzalez (PR)	5	–	–
Andre Purlette (GUY)	6	–	5
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	7	9	–
Napoleon Tagoe (USA)	8	–	7
Virgil Hill (USA)	9	2	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	10	–	9
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	3	12
Akim Tafer (FRA)	–	4	–
Dale Brown (CAN)	11	5	8
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	6	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	–	8	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	10	–
Alex Gonzales (USA)	–	–	2
Torsten May (GER)	12	–	3
Arthur Williams (USA)	19	–	6

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	**C**	**C**	**C**
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	9	–
Clinton Woods (GB)	2	10	–
David Telesco (USA)	3	2	8
Hisashi Teraji (JAP)	4	–	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	5	–	3
Eric Harding (USA)	6	4	9
Reggie Johnson (USA)	7	–	5
Yawe Davis (ITA)	8	–	–
Antonio Tarver (USA)	9	–	1
Greg Wright (USA)	10	–	–
Richard Hall (USA)	–	1	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	3	7
Derrick Harmon (USA)	14	5	–
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	13	6	4
Timo Masua (NZ)	–	7	–
Rogerio Lobo (BRA)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	–	–	6
Lee Osie (SPA)	28	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Byron Mitchell (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Sven Ottke (GER)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Glenn Catley (GB)	1	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	2	4	11
Bruno Girard (FRA)	3	1	5
David Starie (GB)	4	5	6
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	5	11	3
Mario Velt (GER)	6	8	9
Frank Liles (USA)	7	2	–
Vinny Pazienza (USA)	8	–	–
Omar Sheika (USA)	9	–	–
Robin Reid (GB)	10	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	–	3	2
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	6	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	7	–
Frederic Alvarez (FRA)	–	9	–
Craig Cummings (USA)	–	10	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	1
Glenn Johnson (USA)	20	–	4
Bryant Brannon (USA)	–	–	7
Tocker Pudwill (USA)	–	–	8
Sam Leuii (AUSTRL)	–	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
William Joppy (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Robert McCracken (GB)	1	5	3
Antwun Echols (USA)	2	–	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	3	–	9
Kevin Palmer (USA)	4	–	–
Davey Hilton (CAN)	5	11	4
Erland Betare (FRA)	6	–	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	7	–	–
Howard Eastman (GB)	8	6	11
Lonnie Bradley (USA)	9	–	–
Johnson Tshuma (ZIM)	10	–	12
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	–	1	7
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	2	–
Winky Wright (USA)	–	3	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	15	4	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	7	–
Ramon Moyano (ARG)	19	8	–
Sikat Pasarib (IND)	–	9	–
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	13	10	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Brian Barbosa (USA)	14	–	5
Andrew Council (USA)	17	–	6
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	11	–	8
Syd Vanderpool (CAN)	25	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
David Reid (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Fernando Vargas (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Tony Marshall (USA)	1	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	2	2	–
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	3	9	–
Anthony Jones (USA)	4	10	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	5	4	11
Tony Badea (ROM)	6	–	–
Alfred Ankamah (GHA)	7	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	8	1	–
Akira Ohigashi (JAP)	9	–	–
Keith Mullings (USA)	10	–	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	–	3	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	5	–
Rodney Jones (USA)	15	6	10
Javier Castillo (PAN)	–	7	–
Raul Frank (GUY)	–	8	–
Winky Wright (USA)	14	–	1
Ross Thompson (USA)	29	–	2
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	30	–	3
Bronco McKart (USA)	17	–	4
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	11	5
Yory Boy Campas (MEX)	19	–	6
Carl Daniels (USA)	11	12	7
Marshall Simpson (GUY)	–	–	8
Raul Marquez (USA)	–	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Felix Trinidad (PR)	**C**	**–**	**C**
James Page (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	1	–	–
Derrell Coley (USA)	2	–	7
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	3	4	11
Vernon Forrest (USA)	4	6	4
Ike Quartey (GHA)	5	7	5
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	6	10	–
Hector Camacho Jr (USA)	7	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	8	–	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	9	9	–
Oba Carr (USA)	10	8	6
Vacant	–	1	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	25	2	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	26	3	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	12	5	–
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	1
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	2
Michael Covington (USA)	–	–	3
Sam Garr (USA)	17	–	8
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	9
Sean Sullivan (AUSTRL)	–	–	10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	C	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	C
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	1	9	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	2	12	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	3	–	–
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	4	–	–
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	5	–	–
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	6	–	7
Jongkil Kim (KOR)	7	–	–
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	8	6	–
Ahmed Santos (USA)	9	–	–
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	2
Fred Pendleton (USA)	–	2	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	3	–
Junichi Ono (JAP)	–	4	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	5	12
Reggie Green (USA)	11	7	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	8	6
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	10	–
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	1
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	–	3
Allan Vester (DEN)	23	–	4
Cesar Leiva (ARG)	21	–	5
Vince Phillips (USA)	12	–	8
Hector Lopez (USA)	–	–	9
Ray Oliveira (USA)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	C	–
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	C
Billy Schwer (GB)	1	5	3
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	3	–	7
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	4	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	5	–	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	6	4	–
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	7	–	–
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	8	–	–
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	9	7	–
Gabriel Ruelas (USA)	10	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	1	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	17	2	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	–	3	4
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	12	6	–
Golden Johnson (USA)	–	8	–
Edil Martinez (USA)	–	9	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	18	10	–
Billy Irwin (CAN)	22	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Renato Cornett (AUS)	–	–	5
George Scott (SWE)	–	–	6
Ivan Robinson (USA)	13	–	8
Joel Perez (USA)	–	–	9
Stephane Smith (GB)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	C	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	C
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	1	–	–
Jesus Chavez (USA)	2	–	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	3	–	2
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	4	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	5	10	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	6	4	9
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	7	–	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	8	3	1
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	9	–	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	10	–	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	1	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	2	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	5	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	14	6	3
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	7	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	8	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	22	9	–
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	5
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	–	6
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	7
John Brown (USA)	–	–	8
David Santos (USA)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Cesar Soto (MEX)	C	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	C	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	–	–	C
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	1	6	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	2	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	3	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	4	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	5	4	5
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	6	–	–
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	7	–	–
Istvan Kovacs (HUN)	8	8	–
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	9	–	11
Augie Sanchez (USA)	10	–	12
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	1	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	22	2	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	–	3	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	5	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	7	8
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	14	9	–
Lewis Wood (USA)	–	10	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	3
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	4
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	6
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	7
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	9
Frankie Toledo (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	C	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	–	–	C
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	7	3
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	2	–	–
Willie Jorrin (USA)	3	–	7
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	4	–	–
Oscar Larios (MEX)	5	–	–
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	6	10	–
Ariston Clayton (USA)	7	–	–
Kennedy McKinney (USA)	8	–	–
John Johnson (USA)	9	8	10
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	10	–	12
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	1	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	2	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	11	4	–
Carlos Barreto (VEN)	–	5	–
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	21	6	8
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	9	–
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Andrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	4
Jesus Salud (USA)	–	–	5
Jason Pires (USA)	–	–	6
Sean Fletcher (USA)	–	–	9

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	C	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	3	7
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	2	–	5
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	3	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	4	7	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	5	4	–
Jess Maca (PHIL)	6	–	–
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	7	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	8	–	–
Cruz Carbajal (MEX)	9	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	10	2	4
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	1	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	12	5	6
Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)	–	6	–
Kozo Ishii (KOR)	–	8	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	17	9	–
Eidy Moya (VEN)	–	10	–
Bernardo Mendoza (CHI)	–	–	1
Jesus Perez (COL)	24	–	2
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	3
Arthur Johnson (USA)	13	–	8
Pedro Rincon (COL)	–	–	9
Mauricio Martinez (PAN)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
In Joo Cho (KOR)	C	–	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	21	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	3
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	9	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	10	–
Eric Morel (USA)	4	3	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	5	1	10
Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)	6	–	11
Genaro Garcia (MEX)	7	–	–
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	8	–	–
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	9	–	–
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	10	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	4
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	4	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	–	5	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	6	2
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	7	8
Sompichai Kratchingdaeng (THAI)	–	8	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	28	–	1
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	20	12	5
Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)	–	–	6
Jose Rafael Sosa (ARG)	22	–	7
Med Lukchaopormasak (THAI)	–	–	9

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Medgoen 3K Battery (THAI)	C	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	C	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	C
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	1	–	–
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	2	–	11
David Guerault (FRA)	3	5	1
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	4	8	5
Panieng Sasiprabha Okuda (THAI)	5	–	–
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	6	–	–
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	7	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	8	9	4
Saén Sor Ploenchit (THAI)	9	–	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	10	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	1	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	2	10
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	3	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	4	–
Panieng Okuda (THAI)	–	6	–
Hugo Soto (ARG)	–	7	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	–	10	–
Pedro Pena (USA)	29	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	3
Fernando Montiel (MEX)	–	–	6
Gerson Guerrero (MEX)	11	–	7
Isidro Garcia (USA)	12	–	8
Zoltan Lunka (TUR)	20	–	9

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	C
Yosam Choi (KOR)	1	10	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	2	4	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	3	1	2
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	4	3	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	5	–	–
Ridchichai Kiatprabhas (THAI)	6	–	–
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	7	–	12
Sangik Yang (KOR)	8	–	–
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	9	–	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	10	–	–
Medngon 3K Battery (THAI)	–	2	9
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	5	–
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	18	6	7
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	7	–
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	8	–
Jake Matlala (SA)	–	9	–
Pedro Rodriguez (COL)	–	–	1
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	3
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	4
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	–	–	5
Asdrubal Velasquez (COL)	–	–	6
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	12	–	8
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	C	–	–
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	1	11	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	2	–	2
Daniel Reyes (COL)	3	8	6
Satoru Abe (JAP)	4	5	–
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	5	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	6	7	–
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	7	–	–
Udomdet Porpaoin (THAI)	8	9	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	9	–	8
Fernando Luna (MEX)	10	–	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	1	–
Noel Arumbulet (VEN)	–	2	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	3	–
Hurricane Chulun (IND)	–	4	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	6	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	23	10	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	–	–	1
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	3
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	4
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	5
Alberto Rossel (PERU)	–	–	7
Rocky Lim (TWN)	–	–	9
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	10

CLASSIC

From THE RING, May 1981

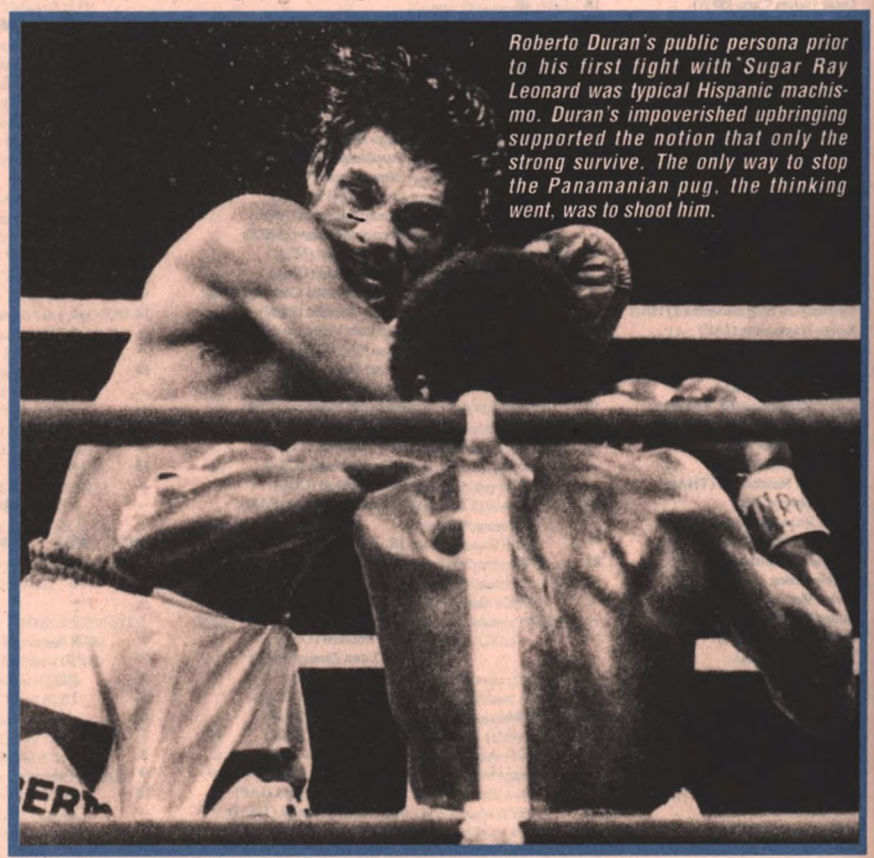
A Former Champ Takes a Look At ...

HISPANIC MACHISMO & WHAT IT MEANT TO ROBERTO DURAN

By Jose Torres

"You know," the lady says, "I have been impressed by the protruding musculature of weightlifters, the roughness and huskiness of football players, and the muscle definition of some baseball players; I have been taken by the enormity and strength of some professional wrestlers, and the true beauty of movie stars like Ryan O'Neil and Paul Newman." The young woman takes time to breathe. "But none turns me on as much as a prize fighter in the ring." She throws a smile at her husband, who had undoubtedly heard this story before and who had thrown a few punches himself once upon a time.

"But if you really want to see an entire



Roberto Duran's public persona prior to his first fight with Sugar Ray Leonard was typical Hispanic machismo. Duran's impoverished upbringing supported the notion that only the strong survive. The only way to stop the Panamanian pug, the thinking went, was to shoot him.

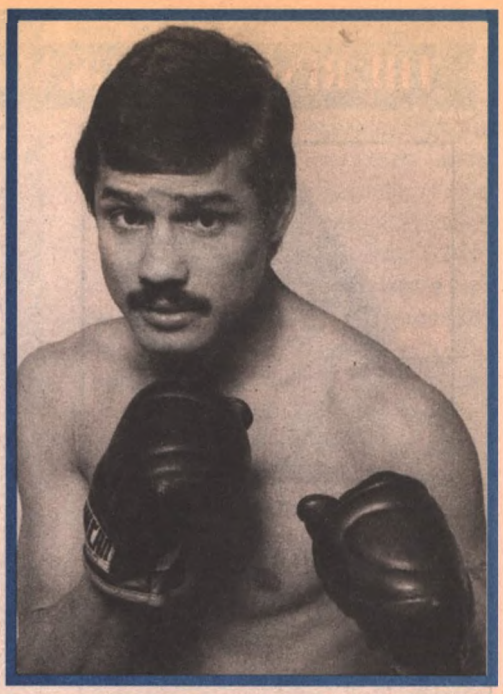
body overtaken by the asperity of goose bumps, just let me watch good Latin fighters in action." This has been a condition that Jennifer has lived with since age 16 when she first met the man who would become her husband—a Latin heavyweight who in the late-1950s and early-1960s had the promise and potential of a future champion, but whose "guts" and "heart" stopped him short.

Notwithstanding the fact that the man closest to her heart had actually been ruined by an overdose of machismo inside the boxing ring, Jennifer, 39, considers any man who dedicates part of his life to exchanging punches for a living as "very, very special. A super macho, rid of fear and panic." And if that man happens to be related to the language, culture, and country of Cervantes, then he's the closest thing to God. "Win or lose," she whispers.

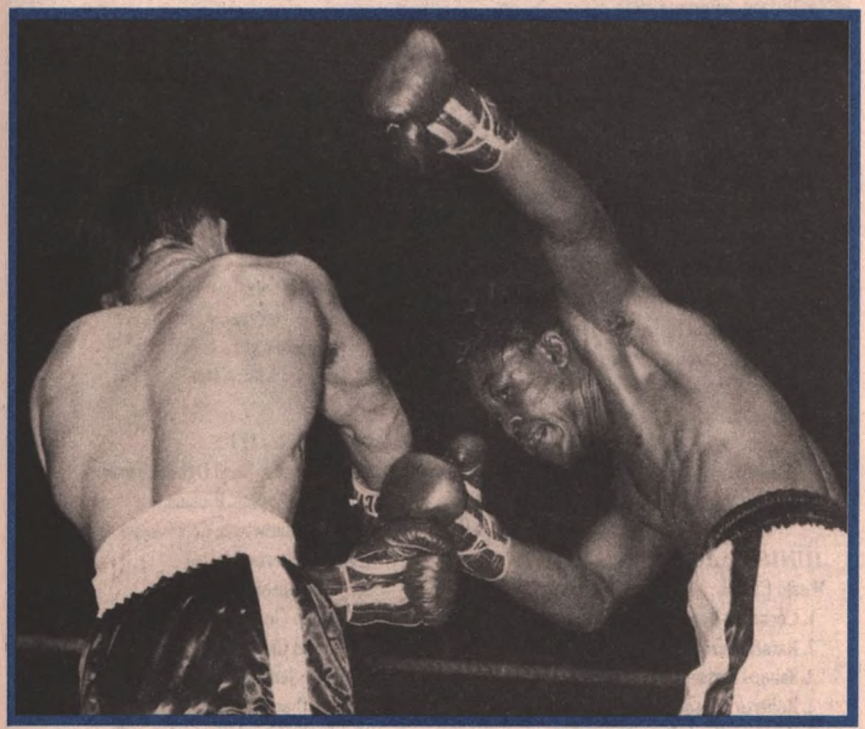
This notion of the Latin boxer is not the exclusive province of Jennifer; it's neither an original idea of present-day boxing buffs, nor a monopolization of female sensitivity.

The conscious, unconscious, brutal, and subtle inculcation of this concept into the Latin society's psyche has been as consistent as it has been effective. Ads, commercials, and, indeed, all the media itself, are dedicated to identifying—and hyping—male machismo. So much so that boxing crowds in Latin countries immediately boo if a defensive fighter is successful in preventing his opponent from connecting solidly while not doing much himself in return. These days, men who choose boxing as their occupation in Latin countries do so with the conviction that lumps, lacerations, cuts, broken bones, and blood are important distinguishing emblems—not necessarily of defeat but are, instead, honorable and dignified badges of victory. There is not much fun in winning unless you can show evidence of machismo.

With very few exceptions, macho fighters come to mind when you start a boxing conversation in a Latin bar. True, no one can forget Mexican fighters like Raton Macias and Vicente Saldivar, Dominican fighters like Carlos Teo Cruz, Puerto Rico's Sixto Escobar, Carlos Ortiz, Wilfredo Gomez, and Wilfred Benitez, Cuba's Jose "Mantequilla" Napoles, Luis Manuel Rodriguez, and Kid Chocolate, or Panama's Ismael Laguna. These Hispanic fighters were fine boxers whose defensive posture made them prominent and memorable in the world of the Sweet Science. And the same honor can be accorded Nicaragua's Alexis Arguello, Argentina's Carlos Monzon, Colombia's Antonio Cervantes, and Chile's Arturo Godoy. These clever boxers, who rejected the traditional concept of the macho syndrome and who became outstanding fighters—some world champions—executing their task in its most basic form, hit and don't get hit, does not quite evoke the same excitement as do other prize fighters, those who were unable to conceal vulnerable body areas from oncoming punches.



If Duran symbolized "macho," then Nicaraguan Alexis Arguello was "anti-macho." Arguello was a world champion who espoused the hit-and-don't-get-hit approach.

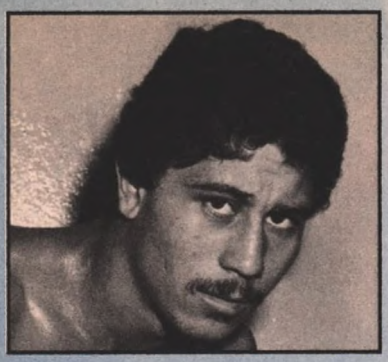


Kid Gavilan is considered one of the greatest Hispanic fighters ever. His greatest attribute? The ability to absorb a good punch. In his title fight against Carmen Basilio in 1953, Gavilan was knocked down for a nine-count in the second round, yet bounced back to win a split decision.

Cuba's Kid Gavilan is considered by many as one of the greatest of all Hispanic pugilists. His best quality? His ability to take a good wallop! He did not have a powerful punch. He simply walked through punches, seemed not to be bothered by direct hits to the jaw, and had the unique capability of being able to absorb the best his rival had to offer. Result: Opponents became discouraged and, more often than not, would give up and quit in disgust. Gavilan's countryman, Benny "Kid" Paret, and Pipino Cuevas, a Mexican, were also prominent because of their special faculty in assimilating punishment. Rocky Rivero, Florentino Fernandez, and Jose Gonzalez didn't go far in their boxing careers, but their macho performances will have a long-lasting life.

Take Mexican Jose "Toluco" Lopez. He embodied every ingredient essential to the making of a macho prize fighter; he engaged

THE RING RATINGS, May 1981



Wilfredo Gomez

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. Mike Weaver, Los Angeles, CA
2. Gerry Cooney, Huntington, NY
3. Leon Spinks, St. Louis, MO
4. Michael Dokes, Akron, OH
5. Gerrie Coetzee, South Africa
6. Marty Monroe, Los Angeles, CA
7. Trevor Berbick, Canada
8. Greg Page, Louisville, KY
9. Ken Norton, Compton, CA
10. James (Quick) Tillis, Chicago, IL

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Matthew Saad Muhammad, Philadelphia, PA
1. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Brooklyn, NY
2. Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
3. Jerry Martin, Philadelphia, PA
4. James Scott, Rahway, NJ
5. Marvin Johnson, Indianapolis, IN
6. Carlos DeLeon, Puerto Rico
7. Yaqui Lopez, Stockton, CA
8. Lotte Mwale, Zambia
9. Marvin Camel, Missoula, MT
10. Mustapha Wasajja, Denmark

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. Alan Minter, England
2. Dwight Davison, Detroit, MI
3. Vito Antuofermo, Brooklyn, NY
4. Mustafa Hamsho, Syria
5. Fulgencio Obelmejias, Venezuela
6. Curtis Parker, Philadelphia, PA
7. Wilford Scypion, New York, NY
8. Frank Fletcher, Philadelphia, PA
9. Tony Sibson, England
10. Ronnie Harris, Canton, OH

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ayub Kalule, Denmark
1. Maurice Hope, England
2. Kenny Bristol, Guyana
3. Rocky Mattioli, Australia
4. Rocky Mosley, Las Vegas, NV
5. Carlos Herrera, Argentina
6. Walter Gomez, Argentina
7. Tyrone Rackley, Tucson, AZ
8. Odell Leonard, Palmer Park, MD
9. Nick Ortiz, Puerto Rico
10. Tony Ayala Jr., San Antonio, TX

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ray Leonard, Palmer Park, MD
1. Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
2. Wilfred Benitez, Puerto Rico
3. Pipino Cuevas, Mexico
4. Roberto Duran, Panama
5. Randy Shields, N. Hollywood, CA
6. Pete Ranzany, Sacramento, CA
7. Adolfo Viruet, Hoboken, NJ
8. Jorgen Hansen, Denmark
9. Luis Primera, Venezuela
10. Clint Jackson, Nashville, TN

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Aaron Pryor, Cincinnati, OH
1. Saoul Mamby, New York, NY
2. Jo Kimpuani, Zaire
3. Lennox Blackmoore, Guyana
4. Sang-Hyun Kim, Korea
5. Domingo Ayala, Puerto Rico
6. Dujuan Johnson, Detroit, MI
7. Miguel Montilla, Dominican Republic
8. Willie Rodriguez, Allentown, PA
9. Bruce Curry, Los Angeles, CA
10. Monroe Brooks, Los Angeles, CA

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Hilmer Kenty, Detroit, MI
2. Jim Watt, Scotland
3. Alexis Arguello, Coral Gables, FL
4. Aaron Pryor, Cincinnati, OH
5. Rodolfo Gonzalez, Mexico
6. Howard Davis, Jr., Glen Cove, NY
7. Sean O'Grady, Oklahoma City, OK
8. Claude Noel, Trinidad
9. Edwin Viruet, Puerto Rico
10. Ernesto Espana, Venezuela

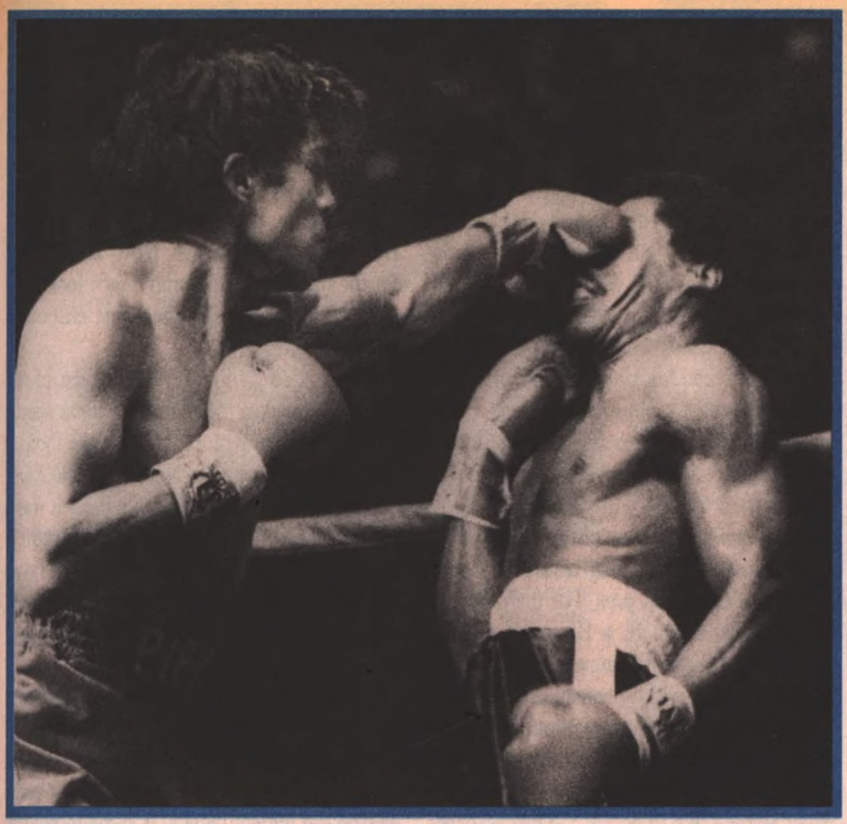
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Yasutsune Uehara, Japan
1. Cornelius Boza-Edwards, England
2. Rafael (Bazooka) Limon, Mexico
3. Samuel Serrano, Puerto Rico
4. Roberto Elizondo, Corpus Christi, TX
5. Ildelfonso Bethelmy, Venezuela
6. Johnny Sato, Los Angeles, CA
7. Victor Echegaray, Argentina
8. Frankie Baltazar, Los Angeles, CA
9. Leonel Hernandez, Venezuela
10. Ruben Riani, Argentina

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Salvador Sanchez, Mexico
1. Eusebio Pedroza, Panama
2. Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
3. Ruben Castillo, Bakersfield, CA
4. Rocky Lockridge, Paterson, NJ
5. Roberto Castanon, Spain
6. Patrick Ford, Guyana
7. Noel Arriesgado, Honolulu, HI
8. Juan LaPorte, New York, NY
9. Francisco Manzo, Mexico
10. Paul Ferrari, Australia

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. Sergio Palma, Argentina
2. Ricardo Cardona, Colombia
3. Leo Cruz, Dominican Republic
4. Mike Ayala, New York, NY
5. Nicky Perez, Tucson, AZ
6. Carmelo Negron, New York, NY
7. Edwin Rosario, Puerto Rico
8. Jose Caba, Dominican Republic
9. Juan (Kid) Meza, Los Angeles, CA
10. Soon-Hyun Chung, Korea

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jeff Chandler, Philadelphia, PA
1. Lupe Pintor, Mexico
2. Julian Solis, Puerto Rico
3. Albert Davila, Los Angeles, CA
4. Jorge Lujan, Panama
5. Roberto Rubaldino, Mexico
6. Eijiro Murata, Japan
7. Oscar Muniz, Los Angeles, CA
8. Jose R. Narvaez, Argentina
9. Norberto Cabrera, Mexico
10. Chul-Ho Kim, Korea

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Shoji Oguma, Japan
1. Hilario Zapata, Panama
2. Peter Mathebula, South Africa
3. Pedro Flores, Mexico
4. Yoko Gushiken, Japan
5. Betulio Gonzalez, Venezuela
6. Miguel Canto, Mexico
7. Willie Jensen, Las Vegas, NV
8. Luis Ibarra, Panama
9. Charlie Magri, England
10. Guty Espadas, Mexico



Pipino Cuevas, a Mexican, was beloved my fans for his skill at landing hard punches, as he did in his welterweight title defense against Angel Espada (above). Cuevas brawled with the wrong guy when Thomas Hearns knocked him out in two rounds to capture the crown in 1980 (below).

in bar fights, refused to do necessary road work, visited the gym only when in the mood, and consumed alcohol continually, abstaining temporarily only when he stood inside the ring.

For almost 10 years, Lopez transcended the unwritten law of what a prize fighter should be all about. People remember Toluco with joy. "He was one of the greatest we ever had," said a Mexican in a Los Angeles tavern, a glass of tequila in hand. Calling himself Tato—and an old friend of the famous Toluco—he transported himself back to Acapulco and the unforgettable night of May 11, 1958, when Lopez fought Willie Parker.

"Toluco had been drinking heavily for days," he remembered. "Even the day before the fight he had gone to bed totally bombed. In round nine, unable to contain a day-long attack of diarrhea, my man walked out and, *bam*, he got hit with a straight right to the guts." There was a pause, and Tato's eyes got wet. "Everyone in the arena became a witness to Toluco's sick stomach. Evidence of it dripped down his leg and tears of shame down his cheeks. He literally got the *mierda* kicked out of him." Tato asked for more tequila and smiled. "Six weeks later, Toluco got Parker back and gave him a boxing lesson. Toluco won every single round." Possessing a record of 114 fights—with only a dozen defeats—Toluco held the Mexican bantamweight championship from 1955 to 1959. He also held the nation's attention when he finally put some of his ring earnings in a bank. "Toluco Opens A Bank Account" read the headlines in *El Nacional*.

The first Hispanic to earn prominence in this country's rings was Luis Firpo, "El Toro De Las Pampas" (or "The Wild Bull Of Las Pampas"). He also brought "Hispanic Machismo" with him. With a large entourage and a conviction that hard training was harmful to boxers, El Toro De Las Pampas was hardly seen in the gymnasium; instead he paid more attention to beautiful senoritas and wine. And to prove that he had the right idea, the huge Argentinian heavyweight began to impress American fighters with the wisdom of his ways. He scored six straight knockouts, including one over Jess Willard, the 250-pound, 6'6½" former heavyweight king, who could not resist Firpo's power past the eighth round.

On September 14, 1923, El Toro De Las Pampas squared off against champion Jack Dempsey. It was a fiery fight!

The first punch thrown in the fight was a wild right that sent an off-balance Dempsey to the canvas. The embarrassed champion got up and walked toward the anxious Argentinian. Before the first round was over, the fighters had been on the canvas a total of nine times. And, although Firpo had been beaten 7-2 in canvas visits, he scored the most sensational knockdown when he drove Dempsey through the ropes and into the laps of shocked sportswriters. A round later, Firpo was flattened for the full count. In Buenos Aires, the local press bragged about the "guts" of Firpo and how he had lost like a true "macho."

Ruben Olivares was another fighter of great tenacity and one who seemed to find enjoyment in taking a couple to give a couple. He had the determination to out-macho many of his rivals. He also possesses a spe-

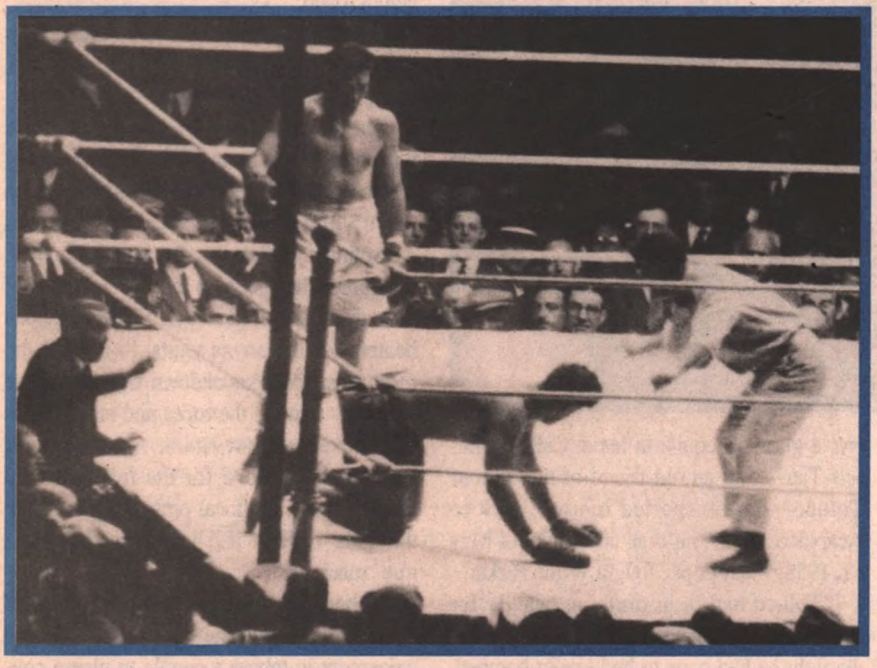
cial place in the heart of the boxing people in general—and the Mexican boxing fan in particular.

Until recently, the crop of Hispanic macho fighters was highlighted by Roberto "Manos De Piedra" Duran. Not only did he behave like a typical "Machista," but the news media found in the Panamanian marvel the ultimate in Hispanic machismo. When he performed, Duran was detached of emotion. And to confirm what the media proclaimed him to be, Duran played his part quite well: He spoke about killing opponents. He grunted like an animal, and his eyes would become cold as ice. There was foam in the corners of his mouth as he snarled at his rivals. Whether in training or in the ring, no one would ever see Duran smile. It was the macho syndrome at its best.

The publicity given to Duran before his fight against Sugar Ray Leonard converted the Panamanian pug into a wild animal who could only be beaten by being shot. Films of his previous fights showed the courage, guts, and machismo of Manos De Piedra. Given the social background of Duran—growing up very poor in the ghettos of Panama and shining shoes to survive—old philosophies were revived and new ones were developed about Hispanic machismo. There is the notion that poverty creates bullies, that in such subcultures only the strong survive, the super macho. As soon as Duran was placed in our consciousness and his past was revealed to the world, Duran thought that perhaps the boxing experts of the press and TV had the right definition of his conduct in the ring: He was a true super macho!

Believing that is to be under extreme pressure. If, in the past, fear had somehow, some way peeped out from somewhere in Duran's psyche and he was able to dismiss it as a mirage, now the psychological pressure could make him aware of the difference between true and imagined fear. With all the complexities that seem to clutch good fighters once they find themselves en route to the championship, Duran had an additional one: Now he had to deal with fear, an emotion that an overwhelming majority of champions learn to dispense with long before they consider themselves real pros. For there should be no doubt about it, a Hispanic macho pugilist is the man who knows no fear!

For Duran it was a phenomenon. He had been able to reach the top without first bothering to inquire about strong emotions and their role in exceptional prize fighters. He never learned that to accept the macho character was to erase fear from his soul. He never knew that to rid himself from fear he was actually discarding the most important component that great champions must have in order to transcend the commonplace in history. Fearless boxing champions are tragic accidents of the fight racket!



The first Hispanic to gain any attention was heavyweight Luis Firpo, who trained poorly, but stood in gallantly against heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey. Firpo knocked Dempsey through the ropes, but Dempsey quickly recovered and knocked Firpo out.

On the night of November 25, 1980, Roberto Duran looked at the other end of the ring in New Orleans and saw Sugar Ray Leonard, a former victim. There was confidence on his face. After all, he had beaten Leonard just a few months before in a hard-fought battle, one that was obviously governed by the Panamanian. Now, as he waited for the opening bell, Duran's face looked no different than it had in their first encounter. But not for long!

Unable to dominate the pattern of the fight as he had in the first one, Duran started to make contact with the emotion he thought he had conquered: fear. Now the grand exponent of Hispanic machismo doubted. It was a moment of humiliation and indignity. Discovering fear in himself was self-betrayal. To paraphrase Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Duran feared fear itself. The champ freaked out!

With ego, pride, dignity, and decorum pulling one way, and the fear of humiliation and disgrace pulling the other, his subconscious took control of the situation. It came to stop the violent debate. It came to prevent Duran from quitting in shame.

Suddenly, Duran began to feel a strange weakness of his arms and legs; unusual cramps began to creep into his midsection. He was now in pain and unable to raise the gloves with energy. Mind over matter!

To Duran, this weird condition was unbearable; enough to stop the action at once. The will to win and the courage and determination to resist wholly gave out to a deeper emotion. A proper justification for Duran—in that complex combination of emotion and physical mechanism struggling to become a workable coordination—to desist from going on as usual.

It was a moment of discouragement and frustration for the champ. And, too swift a decision. He had no time to realize that this sudden action was an unsuspected knockout to the boxing fan in general, and to the media in particular. They are important components of the fight racket whose reaction and opinion play a major role in the business part of professional boxing. The press, as well as the general public, jumped on poor Roberto with a passion. Those who had converted the Panamanian into the greatest of all super machos clutched to the dagger protruding from their chest, shouting curses at Duran to the world. They felt Duran was dragging them down with him!

Ruben Olivares was another Latin fighter with a great propensity to take punishment. His determination to "out-macho" any rival sometimes got him in trouble, as it did here against Danny "Little Red" Lopez, who beat Olivares by seventh-round kayo.

As I had come to expect, ever since my days in the ring, most sportswriters began to analyze Duran's "strange behavior" in their accustomed simple way. Only a very few bothered to dig into the invisible and subjective ingredients that make a fighter tick. Most conceded that Duran was not the super macho they had portrayed him to be over and over again during the 71 previous fights that Duran had won with cleverness, guts, will, and raw determination. All of a sudden, the hero became a pussy cat with a weak heart and the courage of a cloth doll. And Duran, who had played these people's game until that unforgettable eighth round, obtained no relief when attacks on his character, personal life, and boxing career began to assault him from all sides.

Hispanic machismo took a pounding. We were not super macho, after all. The fact that any boxing experts can cite more than four Hispanic names among the 10 most courageous prize fighters in the world today did nothing to dispel this latest notion that Duran ruined the macho syndrome among the Hispanics who make a living exchanging punches for pay in public. They were relegated to that level of machismo where they encourage docility, submissiveness, and weakness of the female species; to that place where they were now "the man of the house," and one who "wears the trousers around here."

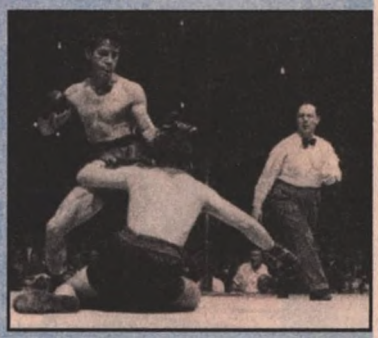
I only hope that every Latin fighter who wants to become champion would stop believing what others say about guts and courage in the ring. I grew up in a macho culture that taught me that men didn't cry, that professional people had to be male, that soldiers and police officers, presidents and executives were all superior and, not incidentally, were all male.

Ultimately, the Hispanic machismo, as practiced by every outstanding Latin fighter, including Roberto Duran, is nothing more than the ability to out-think, out-smart, and out-punch your opponent. It's your capacity to anticipate punches and moves; to have perfect timing and to have the skill to see every oncoming punch. But above all, a true macho man in the ring is the man who spends every second of fighting time dedicated to hitting his rival while not getting hit in return. ■

The Cover: THE RING spoke with "Big" John Tate seven months after he was left quivering on the canvas following a knockout loss to Trevor Berbick. The former WBA heavyweight champion had improved his body through weight training and was even watching his diet, laying off his beloved Oreo cookies. During the time off, his wife, Claudia, helped him improve his reading skills.

The Great Non-Greats: THE RING gathered a group of experts to rate the worst champions in each respective division. Hugo Corro *(pictured)*, the middleweight champ from 1978-79, had the dubious distinction of being named the worst 160-pound champ of all-time.

Rocky Road: The nickname "Rocky" exploded in the early-1980s. There were more fighters using that nickname than in any previous year. Rocky Graziano, whose real name was Thomas Rocco Barbella, is shown here knocking out former welterweight champ Freddie Cochrane.



The Quiet Man: Former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson spoke about life after boxing and how he was using his spare time. Patterson, who became the youngest undisputed heavyweight champ with a knockout of Archie Moore *(pictured)*, was working with young boxers, training them out of a gym he had attached to his house.

Fighter Of The Month: Pedro Flores, a decided underdog, pulled off a shocker in a rematch against Yoko Gushiken for the WBA junior flyweight title. Flores lost the first bout by a close, 15-round decision, then staged a major upset by halting Gushiken in 12 rounds to win the title.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

IS THE DUCKER BEING DUCKED?

Hamed: Says he wants Morales

WBC featherweight champion **Prince Naseem Hamed** has been accused of dodging every remotely dangerous contender since his near-disaster against **Kevin Kelley** in his 1997 U.S. debut. **Kennedy McKinney, Freddie Norwood, Juan Manuel Marquez, Luisito Espinosa, Derrick Gainer**—the list of guys who've claimed Hamed has avoided them at some point over the last two years goes on and on. But now, all of a sudden, the tables have turned a bit. Hamed says he's willing to fight either **Erik Morales** or **Marco Antonio Barrera** (both of whom are smaller than Naz, but are legitimate threats to beat him nevertheless), and it's the potential opponents who seem, for one reason or another, hesitant to meet The Prince.

"Barrera asked for $2.5-million to fight Naz," HBO Sports Senior Vice President **Lou DiBella** said in early-November. "That's a ridiculous price which makes it sound like Barrera doesn't really want the fight. And Naz has told us that he'd love to fight Morales in his second fight of next year, but **Bob Arum** [Morales' promoter] said he wasn't looking to make the fight."

Understanding that the perception might be that Morales is ducking Hamed, Arum, who was thoroughly disgusted by Hamed's foul-infested performance against **Cesar Soto** in October, was quick to clarify the Top Rank stance.

"Erik will take on Hamed, no problem—as long as we fight in a real state with real officials and we are assured there will not be any takedowns or bodyslams," Arum said. "I don't want this fight to be turned into a WWF circus."

So if Arum can be convinced that Hamed will leave the dirty tactics at home—or at least be disqualified if he doesn't—there is hope for a meeting between the two WBC champions in the fall of 2000. But according to Top Rank publicist **Lee Samuels**, the fight that's likely to happen first is Morales-Barrera. Look for that potential thriller before the winter is over.

LISTEN UP

Judah: Title shot on the way

Despite the fact that his October fight with **Orlin Norris** didn't exactly go as planned, **Mike Tyson** is still tentatively scheduled to meet fellow Brooklyn native **Shannon Briggs** at Madison Square Garden, on February 26, 2000. In spite of waning interest in Tyson and a disappointing showing from Briggs in his recent draw with **Frans Botha**, the matchup remains intriguing, and the fight will be offered on pay-per-view, not Showtime. (The Tyson-Norris fight, incidentally, was Showtime's highest rated show of the year, at 10.5). There's a strong possibility that **Zab Judah**, also from Brooklyn, will get his shot at IBF junior welterweight champion **Terronn Millett** on the undercard ... Look for undisputed light heavyweight king **Roy Jones** to return to action on January 15. It appeared at press time that the WBA's mandatory challenger, decent but unproven **Richard Hall**, was the most likely opponent ... IBF middleweight champ **Bernard Hopkins** has suggested he'll be dropping down to 154 pounds sometime in 2000 for a shot at **Fernando Vargas**, assuming Vargas gets by his proposed March defense against **Ike Quartey** ... A rematch between undefeated WBC super flyweight champ **In Joo Cho** and former titlist **Gerry Penalosa** is set for January 2 in Seoul, South Korea. Cho won their initial meeting in August '98 by split decision ... Check out this proposed junior welterweight doubleheader for St. Patrick's Day 2000 in Boston: local hero **"Irish" Mickey Ward** vs. undefeated British comer **Shea Neary**, and former junior lightweight champion **Arturo Gatti** vs. two-division former champ **Joey Gamache**. There may be more red on the canvas than green in the crowd by the time that show's over with. The plan is for the winners to meet each other later in the year ... According to DiBella, a couple of potential opponents for WBC 140-pound champ **Kostya Tszyu** are being considered by HBO for early-2000. "We're thinking about matching Tszyu against **Ivan Robinson**," DiBella said, "but I'd like Ivan to fight once or twice at 140 first and see what he can do at that weight. Another possibility is a rematch with **Vince Phillips**, if Phillips can make the weight. The WBC is still pushing for Tszyu against **Julio Cesar Chavez**, but I can tell you, 100 percent, we will not buy that fight." That sound you hear is boxing fans letting out a collective sigh of relief. ■

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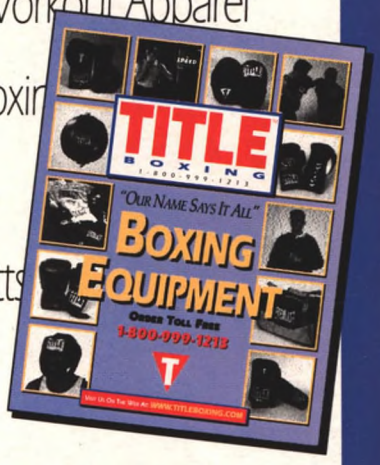

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